Homunculus

HIDEO YAMAMOTO

7-8

Homunculus

HIDEO YAMAMOTO

Volume 7

CAN YOU QUIT IT?

YOU'RE FREAKING ME OUT.

UM. HELLOOO?

WHAT A HYPOCRITE.

AND YOU LECTURED *ME* ABOUT EYE CONTACT.

シーーーン…

GOIN' THROUGH THE MOTIONS LIKE A WALKIN' CORPSE. THE HELL DO *YOU* KNOW?!

I'M A HYPOCRITE? NOT TWO SECONDS AGO, YOU WAS LIVIN' A DAMN LIE.

HUH?

LIAR!!

GRGL...

BRRRRAH!!

FU

DO EXCUSE ME!

G... GOSH!

KLAK KLAK KLAK

BE RIGHT BACK. POWDERING MY NOSE.

...

SHWT

スタ FWD!!

スタ TMD

スタ TMD

スタ TMD

Restrooms

.....

USING THE WOMEN'S WOULD BE ILLEGAL, SO...

I GUESS...

GA-CHAK

!

SHF...

<THE LADIES' ROOM IS THAT WAY.>

.....

.....!

<OH!?

.....

<CUTIE.>

CREAK

.....

CREAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

MM...

EHM...

BRRAP!

.....

SKRIK

SKRIK

キィィ

!

SIAPE ooo

!

BRRR...

GRG...

GRGG...

BRRR

THRSH

THRSH

THRSH

THE HELL ?!

WHAT ...?

?

BUT I FEEL... LIGHTER SOMEHOW!

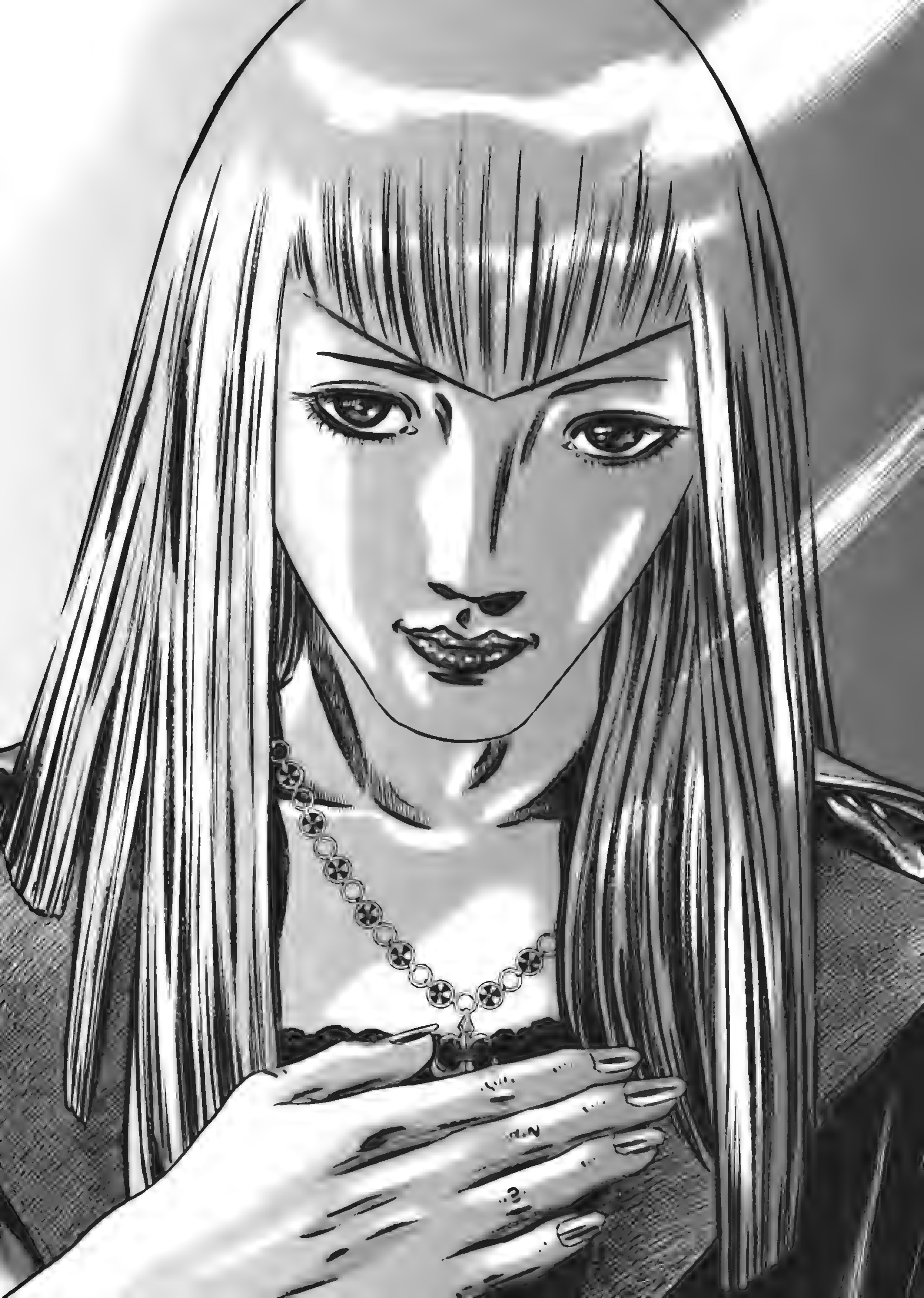
I MUST BE DRUNKER THAN I THOUGHT.

.....

IT'S THE STRANGEST THING...

AND YET...

!



STARE!...

STARE!...

!

TAKE A PICTURE, BITCH!

SMILE

SKRIK

♫ HM-HMM, HM HM-HMMM-! ♫

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

FWSH...

.....

HE REALLY JUST LEFT? UGH.

ハラリ
FLUTTER

MAN.

プチ
PLUCK

MAN.

WOMAN.

プチ
PLUCK

WOMAN.

MAN.

WOMAN.

MAN.

WOMAN.

FLIP

FLIP

FLIP

FLIP

FLIP

FLIP

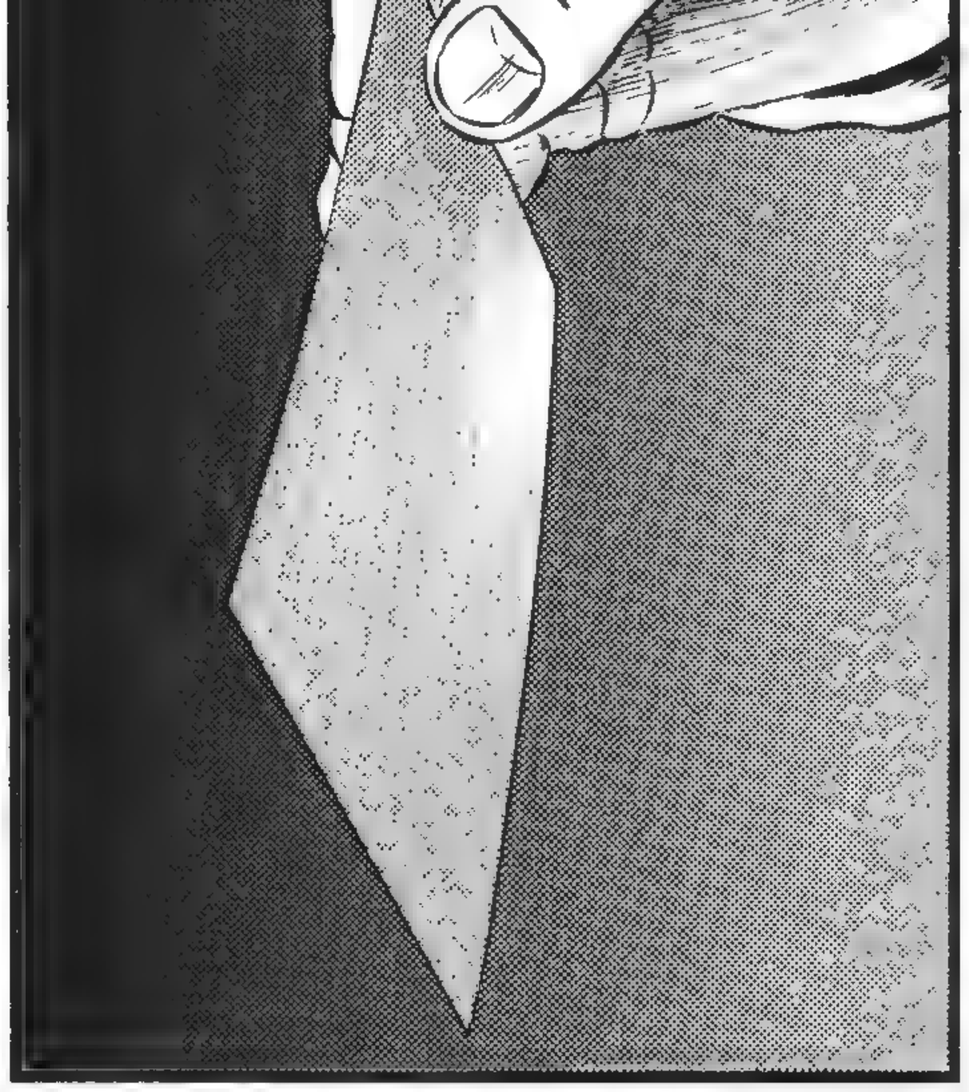
FLIP

FLIP

FLIP

FLIP

FLIP



ARRGHH

ARRGHH

PRRESS

PRRESS

PRRESS

PRRESS

PRRESS

SUUUUUUU...

THWP

I CAN'T SMELL SHIT!

.....

NOTHIN'.

WHP

LET'S JUST SLEEP.

RMB

RMB

RMB

BLINK

AUHOO.

COLD AS BALLS...

PBFT

SHRIIIII

C'MON, GIRL.

LET'S WARM UP.

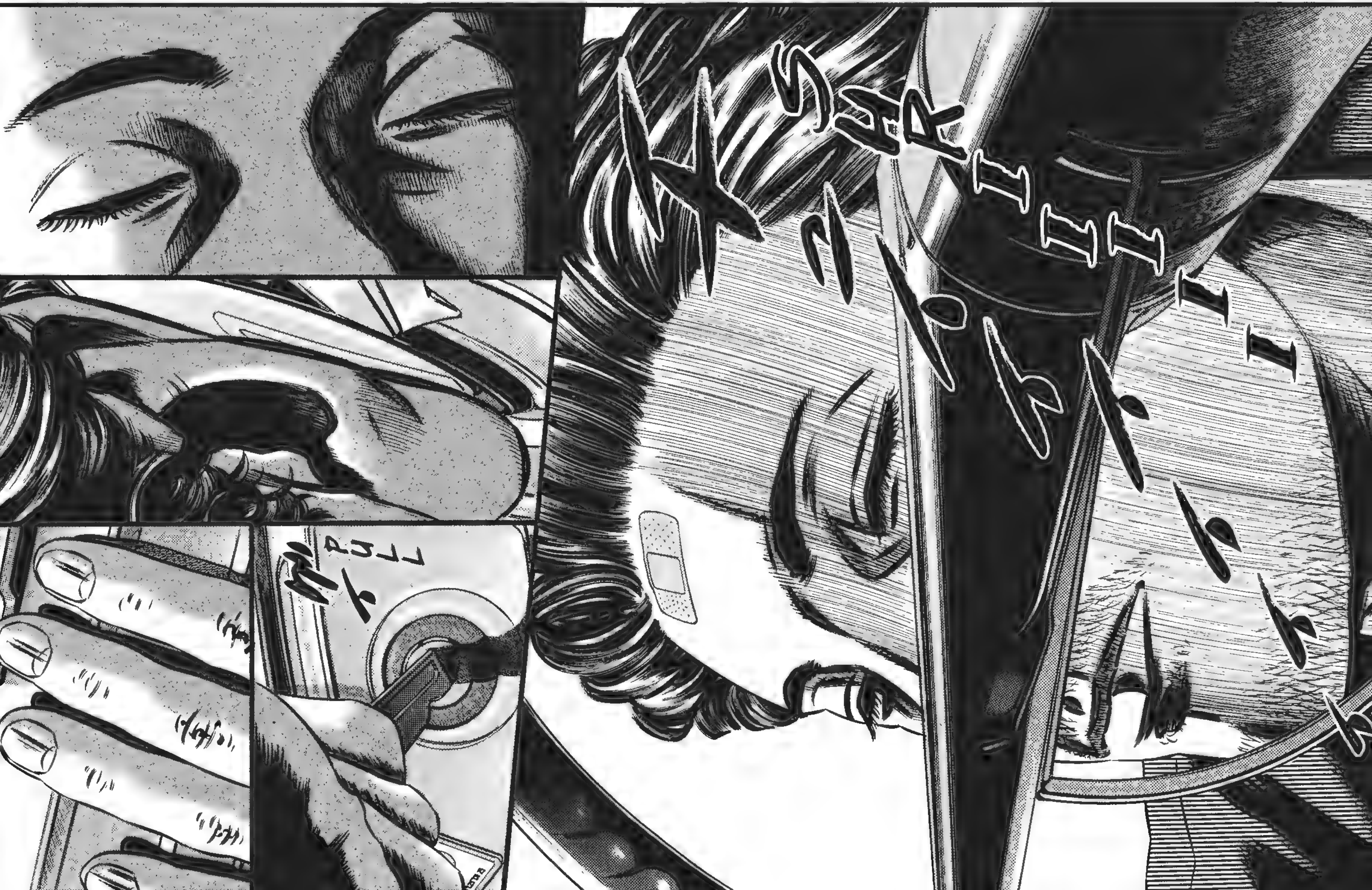
GNG

.....

PBFT

THIS TRAIN.....

TO PRESS:


ドシュ
ドシュ
ドシュ

BLINK

HM?

PBFT

PBFT

FZZSHRRRRRRR

NO CLUE *WHAT* SHE'S FEELING...

.....?

I'M STUMPED.

SHIT.

HEY!

KEN-SAN!

NICE MORNIN', EH?

OH! CAR GUY!

SHH-KSH

SHH-KSH

SHH-KSH

SPLASH

STARE

the one before the surgery, did feel alive.

Maybe the old you...

AND WHAT THE HELL...

WHAT WAS MY FACE LIKE BEFORE?

DROVE ME TO CHANGE IT?

I CAN'T REMEMBER.

ARE MY EYES.

THE ONLY THINGS LEFT FROM MY OLD FACE...

.....

AND IT'S NOT JUST MY FACE.

HOW GROTESQUE WILL I MAKE MYSELF BY THE END?

SO MUCH OF ME HAS BEEN COMPLETELY SCRAMBLED.

COME TO THINK OF IT ...

!

ITO'S WATER HASN'T TRANSFERRED TO ME YET.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
THERE! SEE, DAD?

ISN'T HE PRETTY?

.....

OH, I'M IN NO HURRY.

SO, THIS ULTRASOUND EQUIPMENT. WHEN DO YOU NEED IT BY?

WHENEVER IT'S CONVENIENT FOR YOU IS FINE.

TOKOTOKOTOKOTOKO

MURMUR...

IN FACT ...

JUST FORGET IT.

.....

?!

ANYWAY, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ISN'T OUR NEW FISHY *ADORABLE?*

BLRBL BLRB...

OUR LI'L SIESTA! ♪

S...

SIESTA?

THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE FAMILY! ♪

YUP!

TOK
コン
TOK
コン

GREAT NAME, ISN'T IT?

.....

SHF

?!

FWUMP

.....!

!

I GOT IT!

!

SHF...

.....

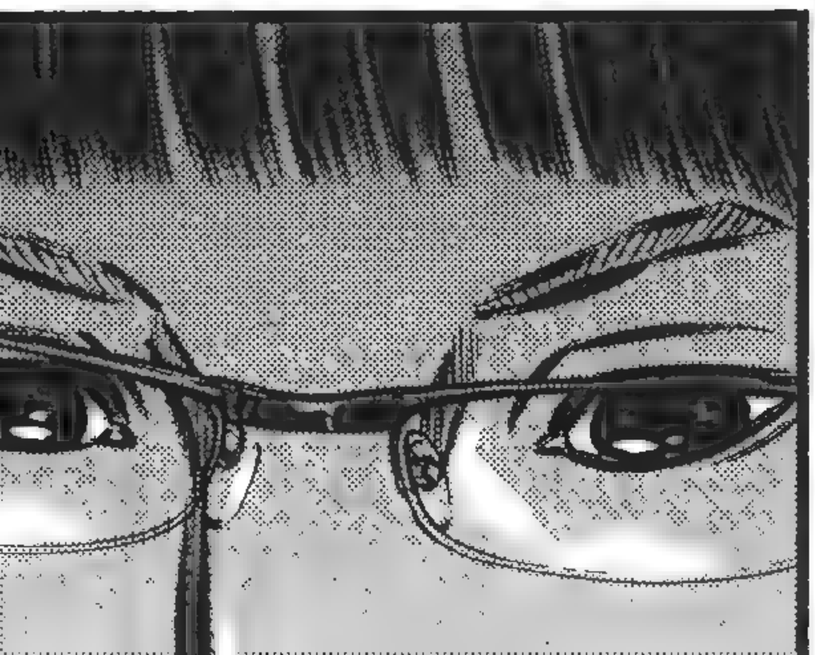
ENTRANCE CEREMONY

WHAT THE...?

HEY! THESE ARE ALL OF ME!

FLIP

THIS REALLY BRINGS ME BACK!
HA HA, AW!



WAIT...

?

TH...

THAT'S YOU.

WHO'S THIS LITTLE GIRL?

I... HID THEM.

NO WAY! I THOUGHT WE LOST ALL THE PHOTOS OF ME FROM BEFORE ELEMENTARY...

FLIP

WHAT?!

FLIP

FLIP

BUT WHY?

HUH?

REALLY?

?!

I'M SORRY...

HA HA! WHAT ARE YOU APOLOGIZING FOR, DAD?

IS THAT...? HUNH.

A GUPPY...?

I HAD...

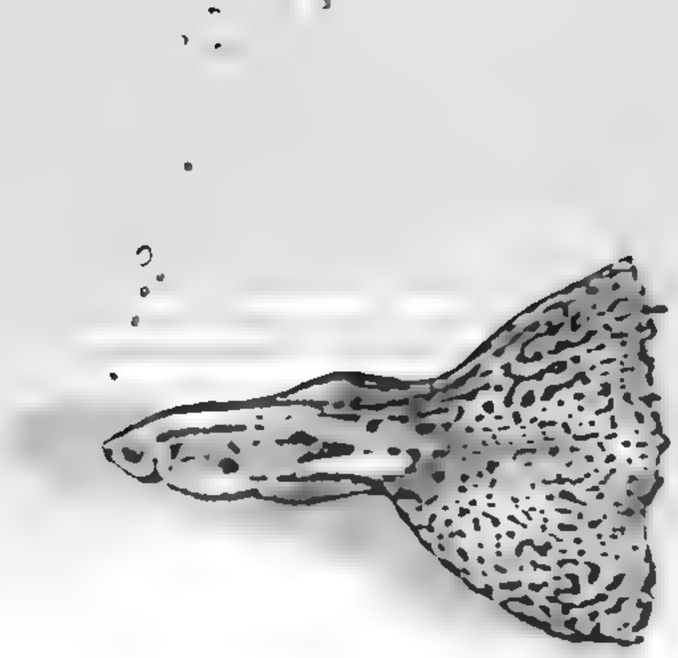
HOW ODD...

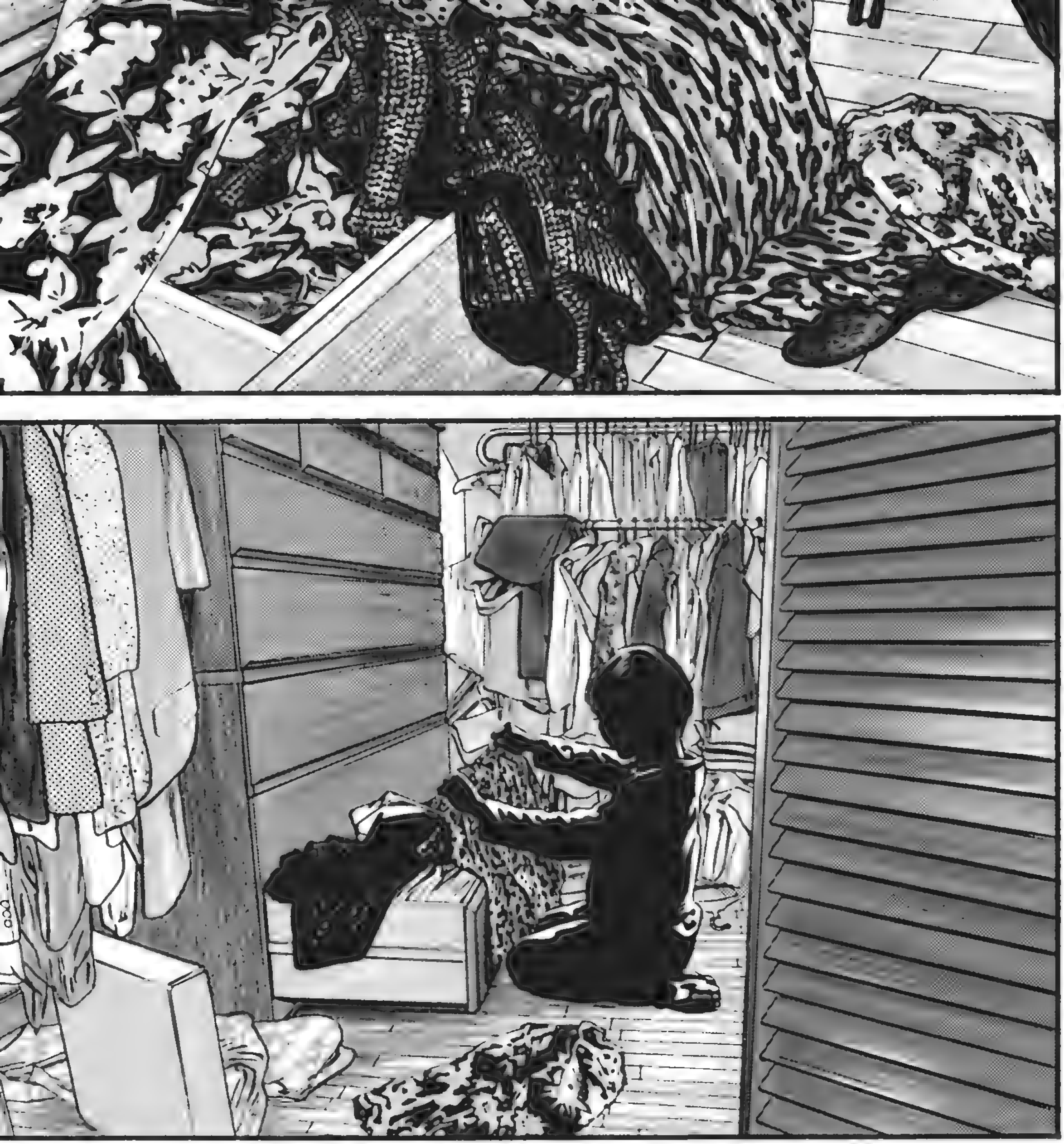
I...

I ALWAYS WANTED TO APOLOGIZE... ABOUT SIESTA.

S...

SIESTA ...?



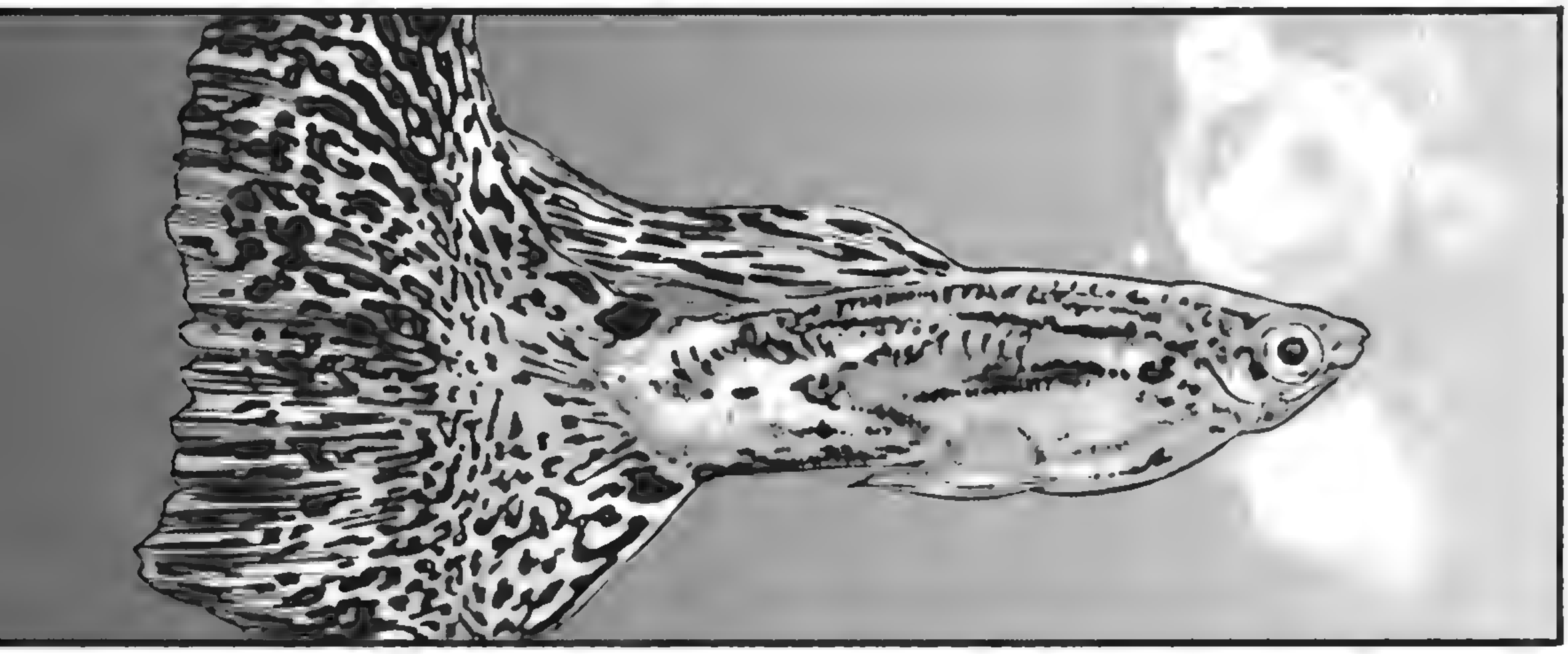


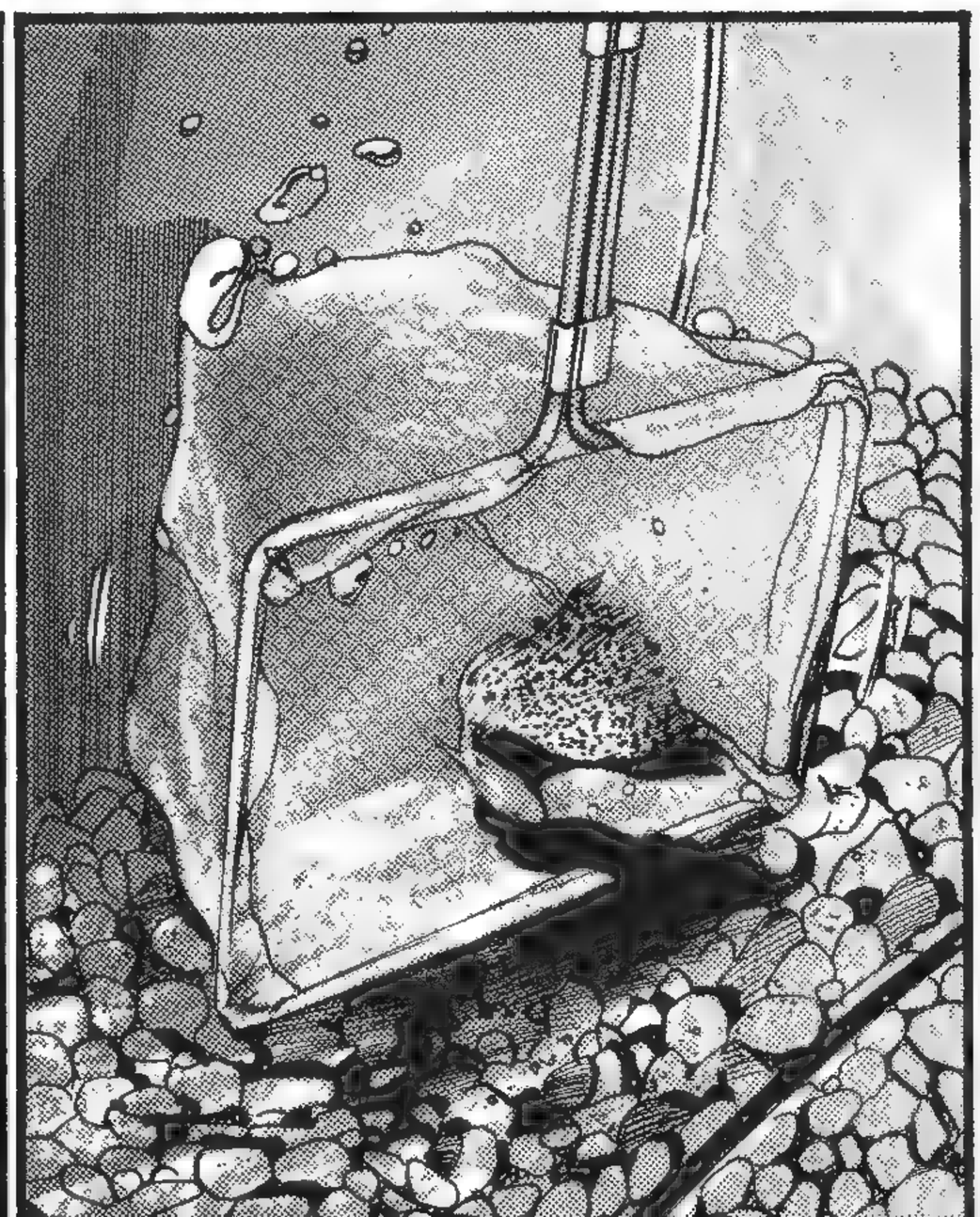
MOMIJI CRAYONS

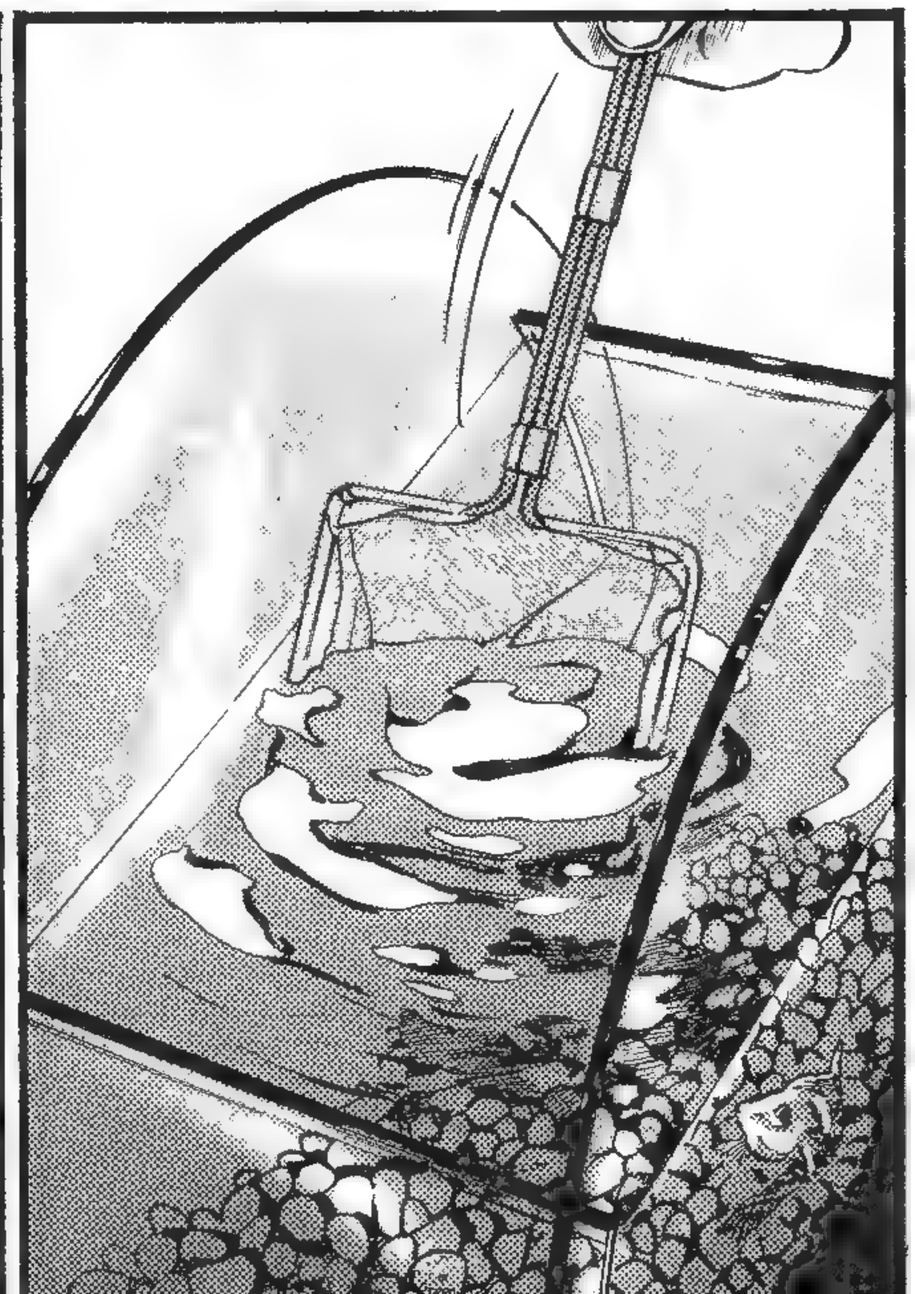
MOMIJI CRAYONS

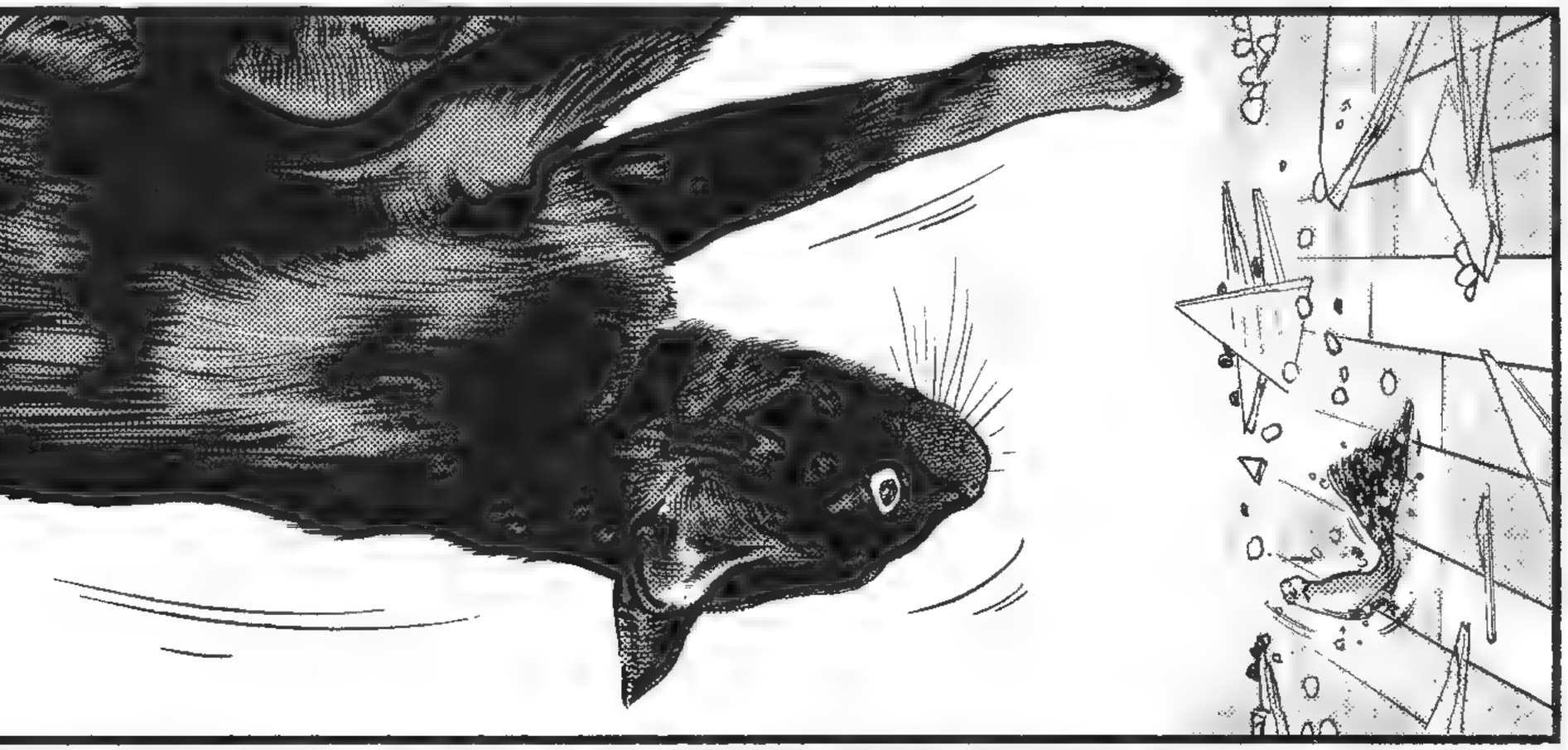
MOMIJI CRAYONS

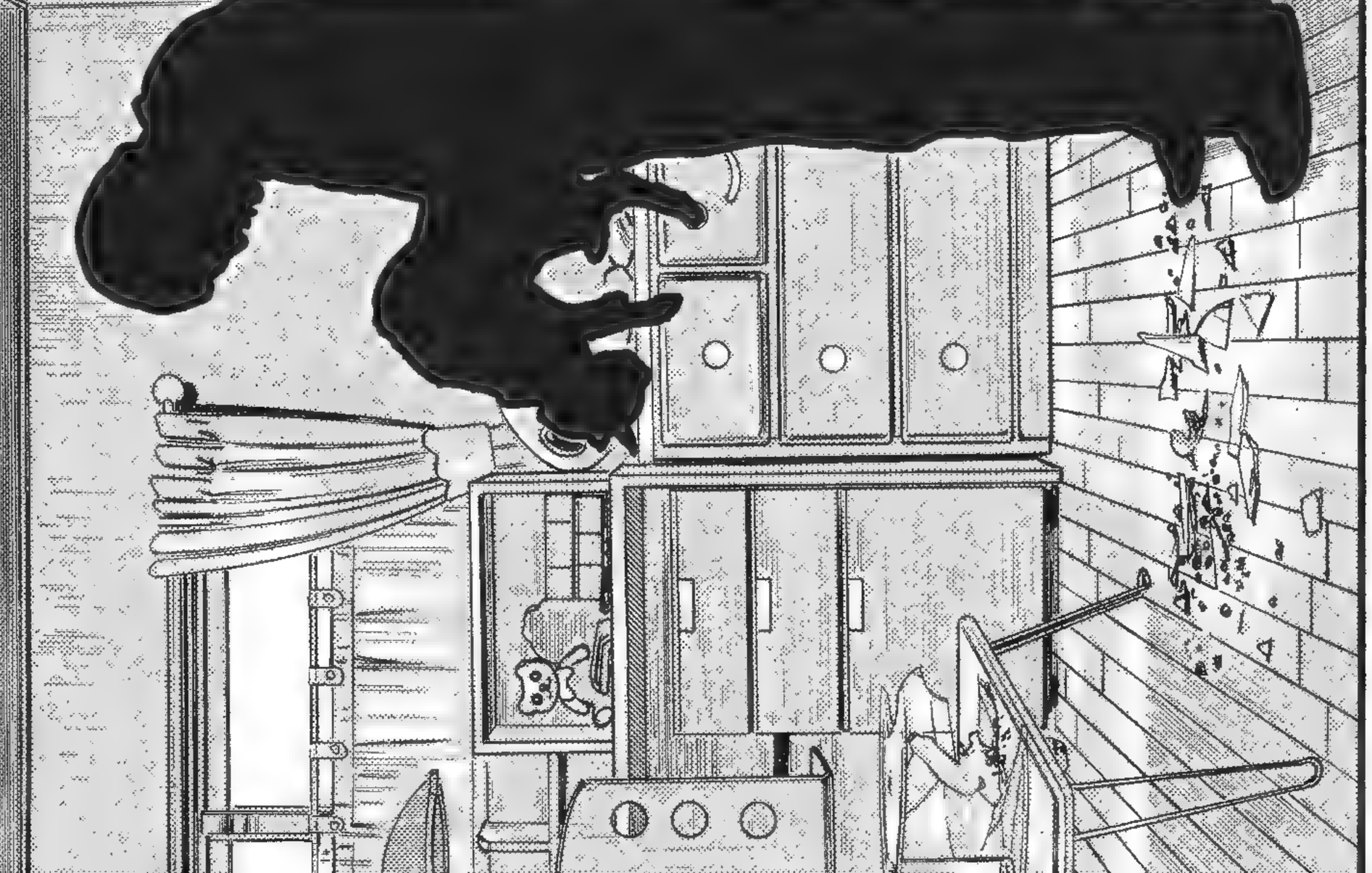
MOMIJI CRAYONS

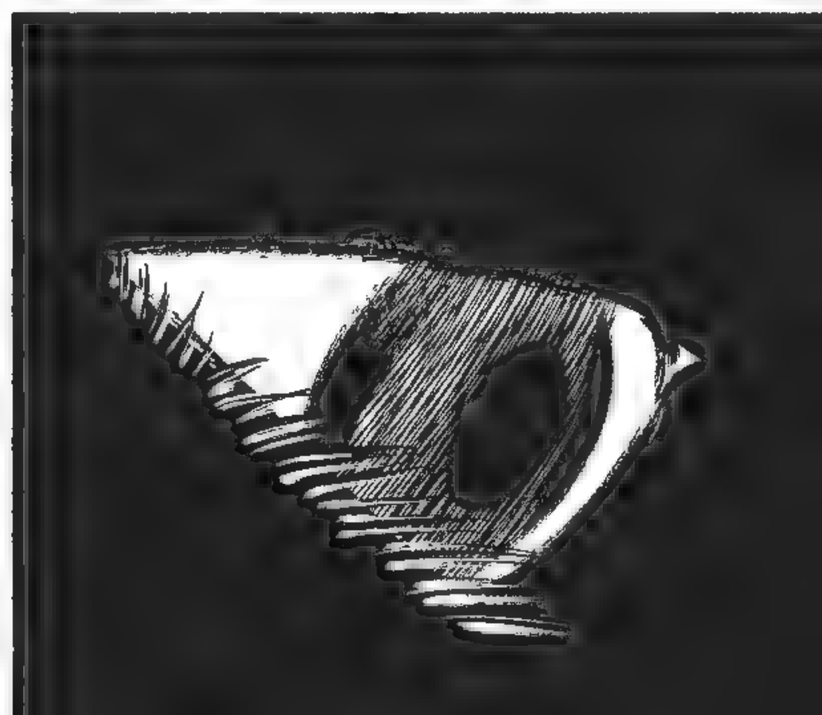


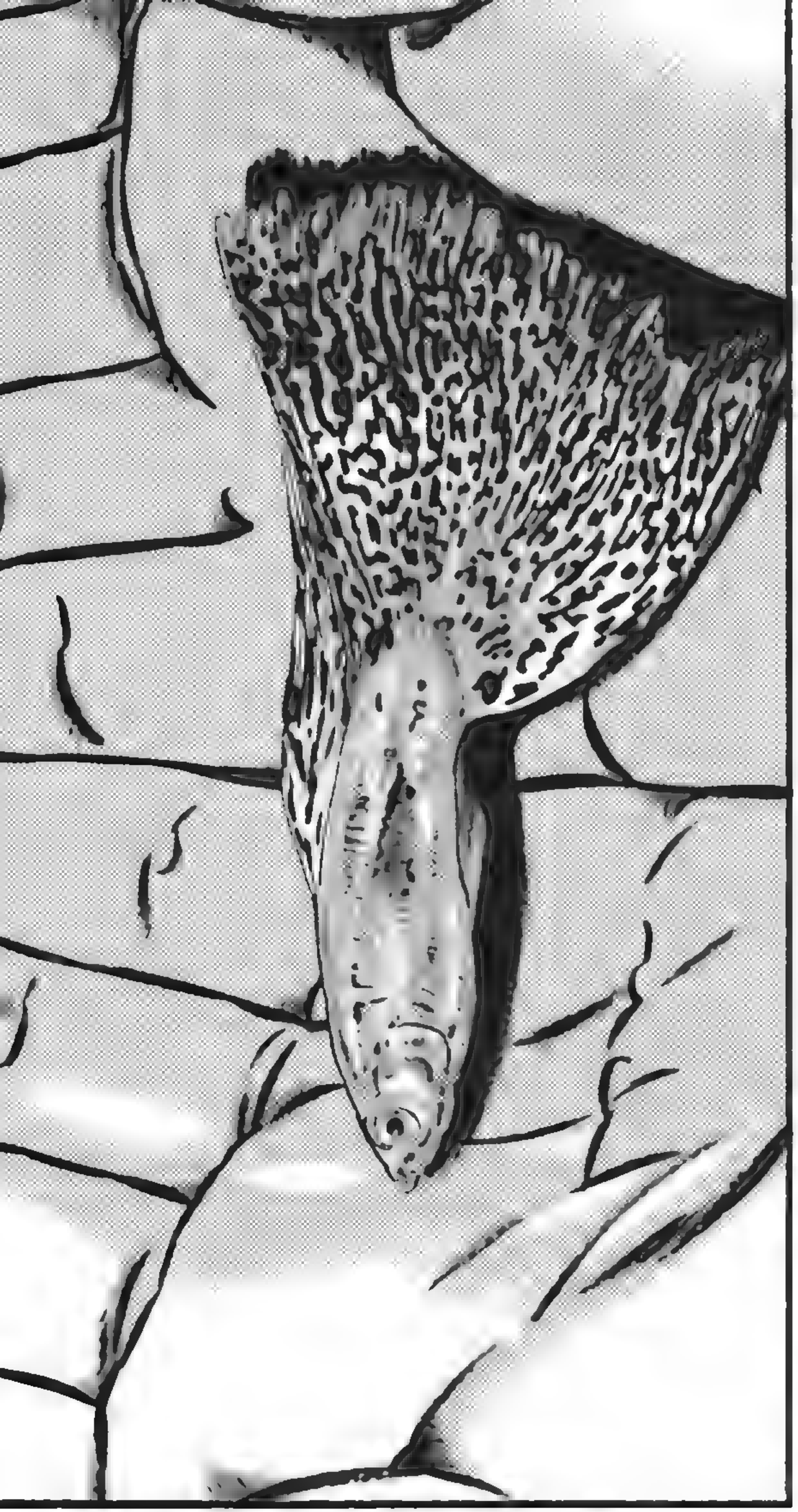


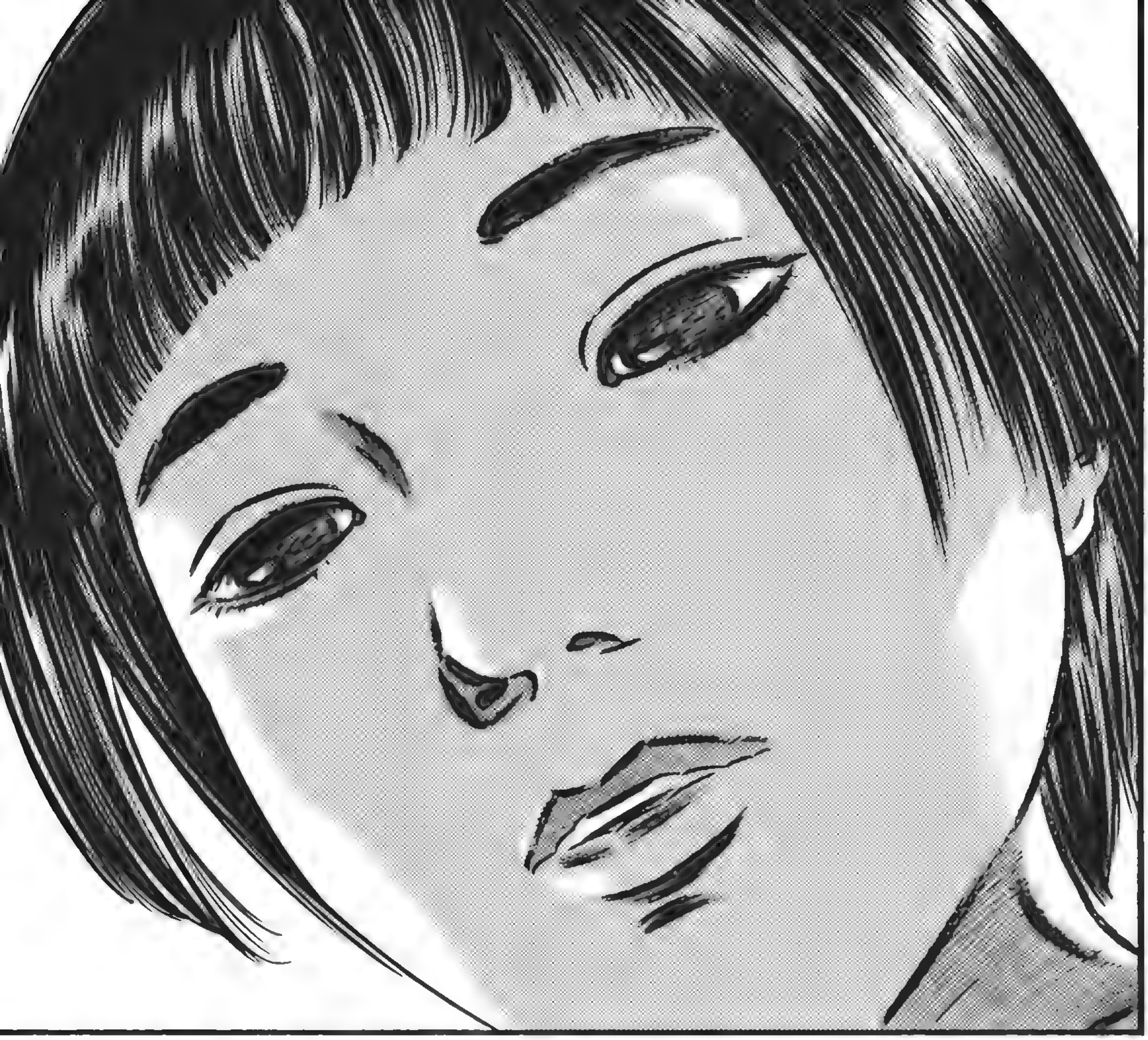












BRRAP!

S...

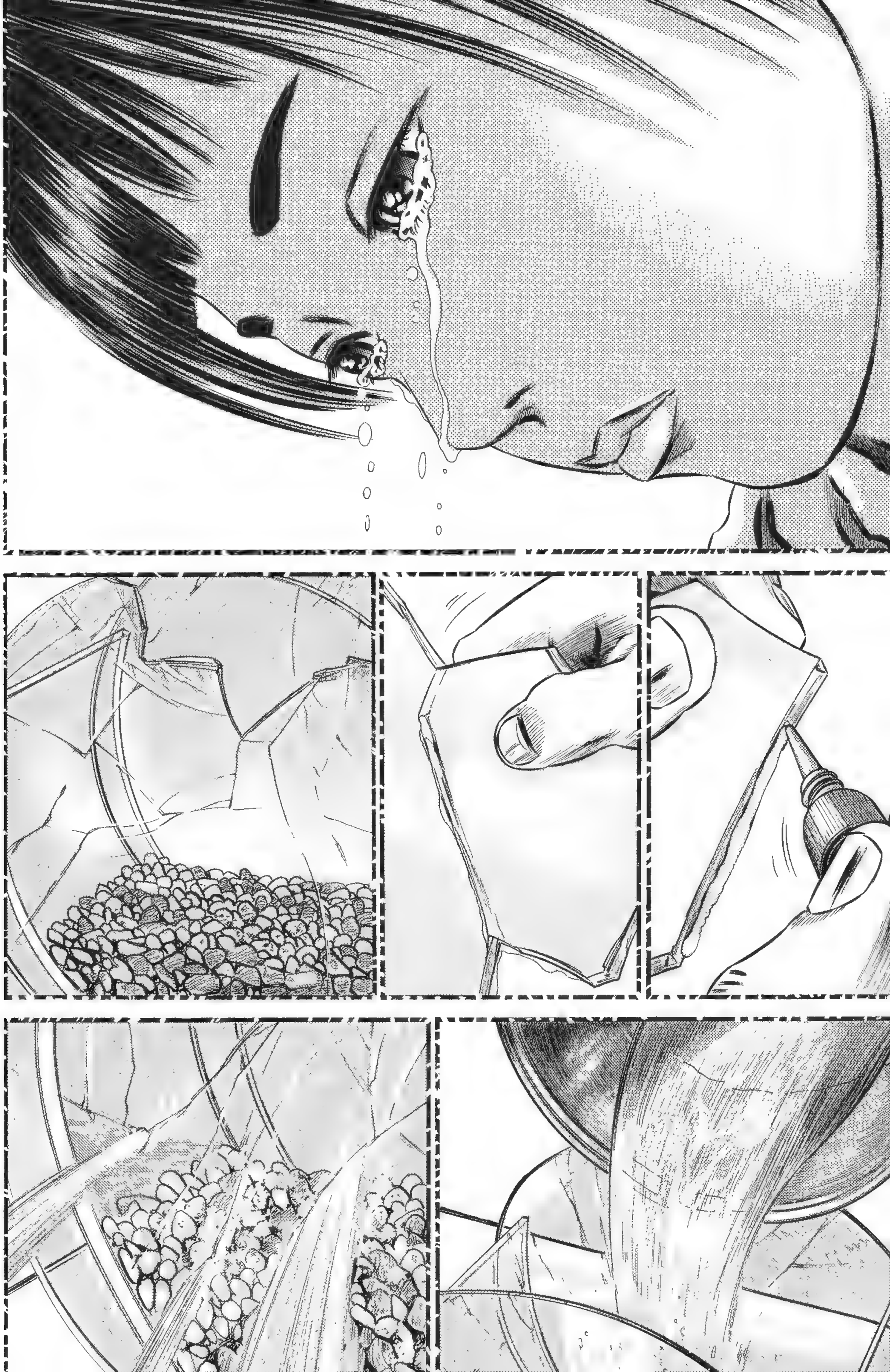
SIESTA ...

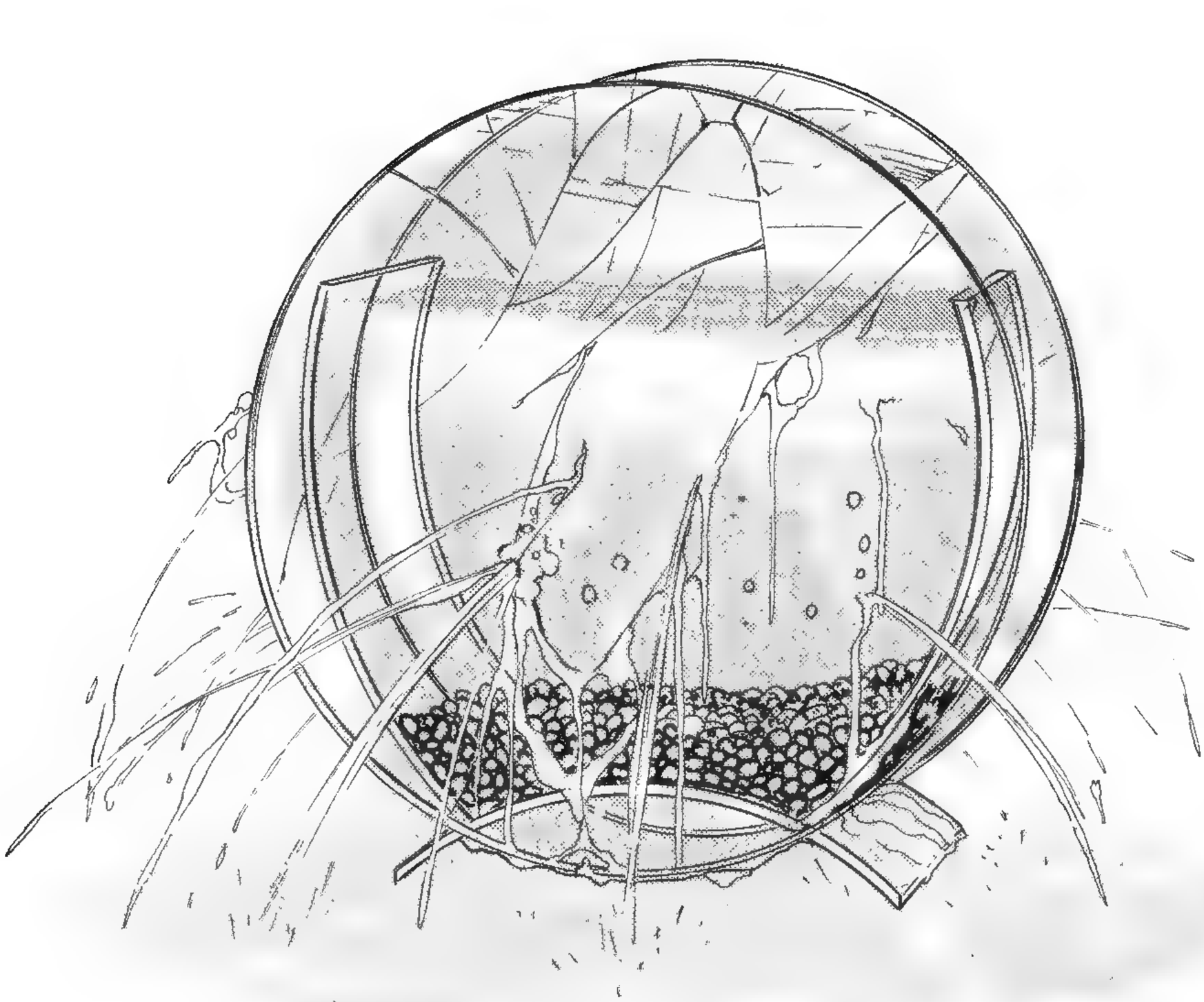
MANABU...

I KILLED IT.

MANABU...
I'M SORRY...

I'M SO SORRY.





BEFORE I CHANGED MY FACE.

I MUST HAVE FELT REAL AT SOME POINT.

SOME-THING THAT HURT ME.

BUT WHAT?

SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED BEFORE THE SURGERY.

SPLSH

VIXA

GLARE

I HAVE NO WAY TO SEE MY OLD FACE...

THERE'S ONLY ONE LEAD I CAN FOLLOW.

AND NO MEMORIES OF MY OLD LIFE. SO...

THESE HOMUNCULI!

FLEA MARKET

YOU DAMN TWISTED ECHOES OF MY OWN PSYCHE...

WHICH ONE OF YOU IS IT?

WHO KNOWS MY TRUE FACE?

WHICH ONE OF YOU KNOWS THE TRUE ME?

STARE ...

TO PUSH ME TO SOMETHING AS EXTREME AS SURGERY?

WHAT HAPPENED ...

I WANT ANSWERS, DAMN IT!

!!

THE HELL ARE *YOU* STARING AT, PUNK?!!

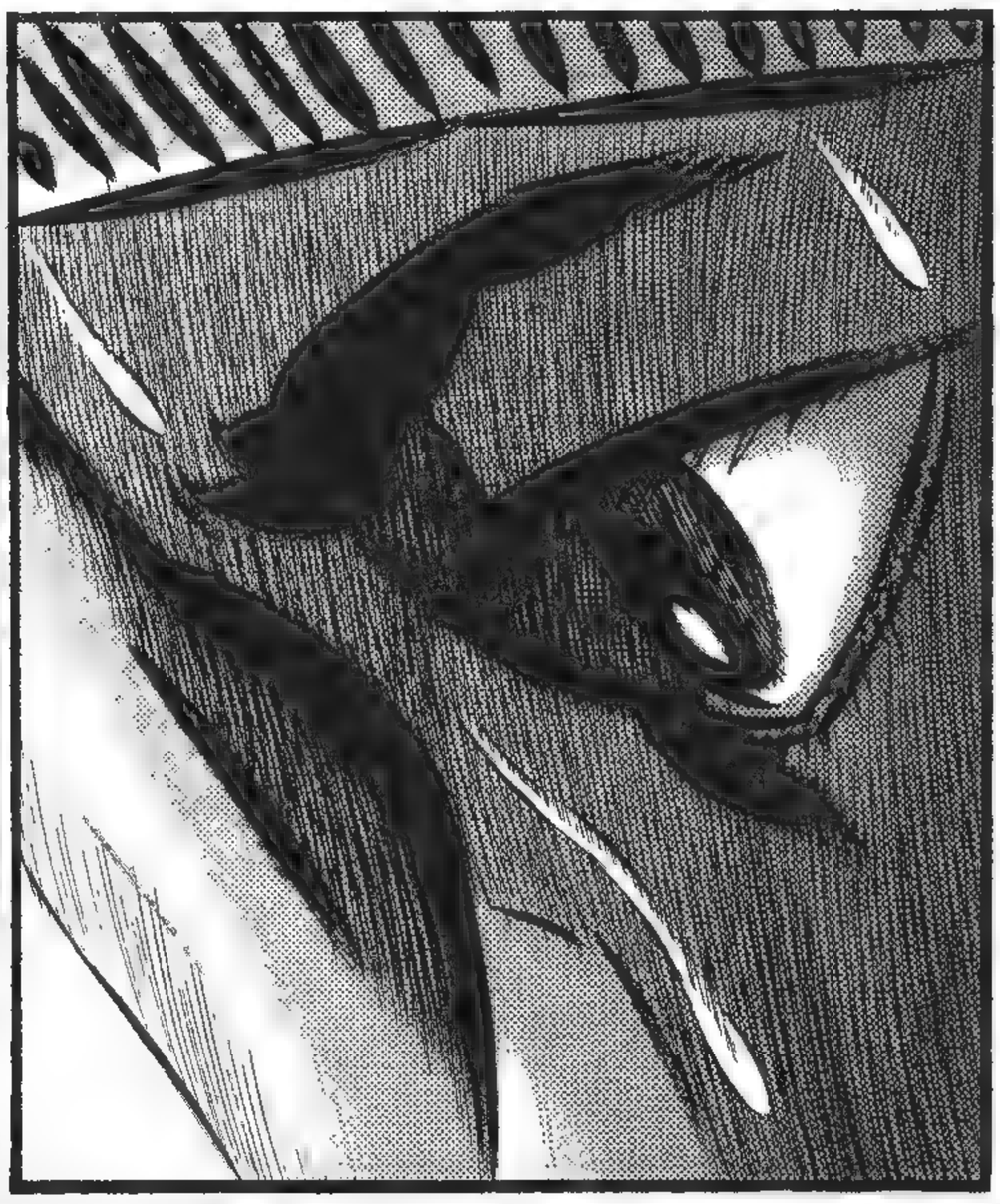
WHAT'S *HIS* DEAL?

SORRY, MAN.

GLORP

GLORP

S...



FEET... NUMB TO THE WORLD.

FEET DEVOID OF THE SHARP STENCH OF LIFE.

WHAT DID MY FEET SMELL LIKE BEFORE THEY TURNED INTO... THIS?

WAIT.

WOULD IT EVEN MATTER IF I NEVER GOT MY MEMORIES BACK?

WHAT DOES IT MATTER HOW THEY SMELL, ANYWAY?

THAT'S RIGHT...

I DON'T
NEED
TO FEEL
REAL.

EVEN IF I FOUND MY "TRUE SELF"...

WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO ME?

WOULDN'T CHANGE MY PRESENT.

FIGURING OUT MY PAST...

AND ON THAT NOTE... WHO THE HELL AM I?

WHAT THE HELL ARE HOMUNCULI, IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS?

HEY, CAR GUY!

Y'ALL RIGHT, KID?

VOOM!

HELLO?

!

WHOA!

?

YOU AIN'T THERE YET, KID.

KEN-SAN...

Y'AINT OLD ENUFF TO HAVE YER HEAD DOWN LIKE THAT.

!

IF YA GOT YER EYES ON THE FLOOR, EVERYTHIN' ELSE...FADES INTO NOTHIN'.

CAN'T SEE THE WORLD LIKE THAT, Y'KNOW.

YER STILL YOUNG. YOU GOT CHANCES LEFT.

YA CAN'T BLOCK OUT THE WORLD JUST YET.

?

LOOK OVER THERE.

!

!

WHAT YOU WAS DOIN' THERE, GLARIN' DOWN ATCHER FEET... THAT'S HOW *WE* WALK. THE DOWN-AN'-OUTS.

.....

AND WE AIN'T DOIN' IT TO SCAN FOR LOOSE CHANGE.

WE DON'T WANT NOTHIN' TO HAPPEN TO US, *GOOD OR* BAD...

'CAUSE WE DON'T WANNA FEEL **NOTHIN'**. WHY?

WE DON'T WANNA BE *SEEN* BY NOBODY.

WE DON'T WANNA LOOK AT NOBODY.

'CAUSE WE *ARE* NOTHIN'.

WHAT?

NOTHING?

YA LOSE SIGHT OF WHERE THE HELL YOU ARE.

AFTER A WHILE, IF YA KEEP REJECTIN' EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD BUT YER OWN FEET...

EVENTUALLY, YA START TO THINK, "DO I EVEN EXIST AT ALL?"

ONCE YOU HAVE *THAT* THOUGHT, Y'GET DESPERATE. WANNA DOUBLE-CHECK YER REFLECTION TO MAKE SURE YER STILL IN THERE.

BUT...YOU CAN'T. YOU AIN'T GOT THE GUTS TO EVEN LOOK.

SO WE KEEP OUR EYES ON OUR OWN BEAT-UP SHOES JUST TO REMIND OURSELVES THEY'RE TOUCHIN' THE GROUND. THAT AT LEAST *PART* OF US IS CONNECTIN' WITH THE WORLD. THAT'S HOW WE LIVE.

!

BUT YOU'RE TOO YOUNG FOR THAT SHIT. EYES UP FRONT.

YES, SIR!

Keh keh keh!

.....

WHAT'S THAT SMELL?

WHERE'S IT COMING FROM?

HM?

TWITCH

!

SHOES ...?

SNFF SNFF

SNFF SNFF

HELLO, SIR! PLEASE, TAKE A LOOK!

SHF

……?

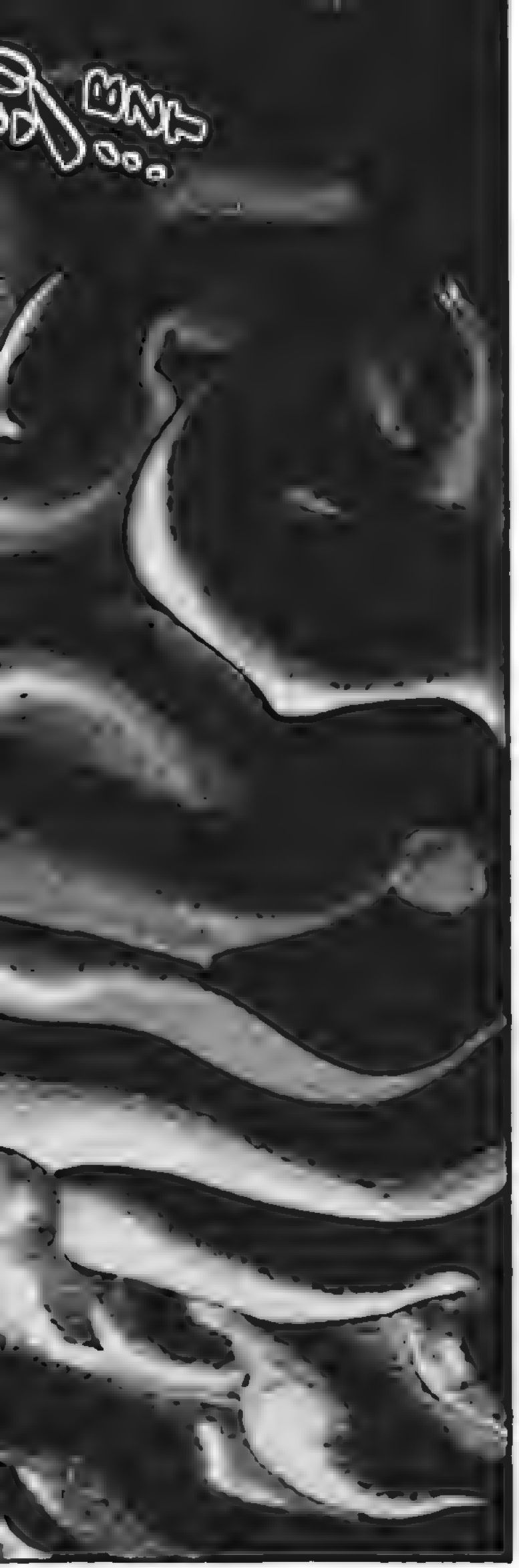
BWOOF

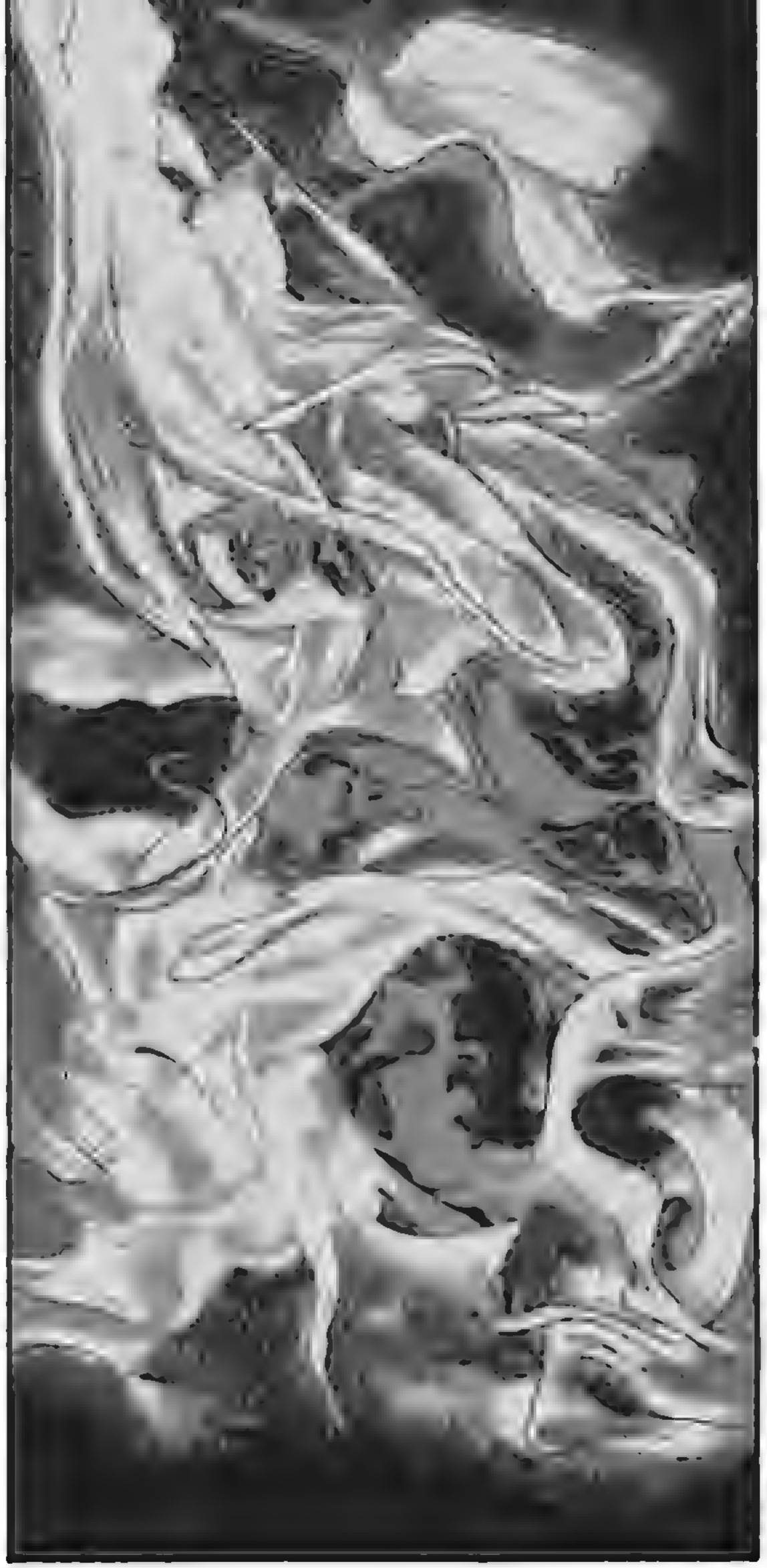
THEY STINK!

NGH...

SUUU

スゥゥ


BOOM
...



UH... PARDON?

I WAS WRONG.

THERE'S STILL ONE LEFT.

?

A PHOTO ...

OF MY OLD FACE...

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

KA-CHK

TNK

Street: Ticket

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

RUSTLE ガ！

FWAH ガラ

ガシッ

FUCKIN' DISGUSTING.

THIS IS THE ONE...

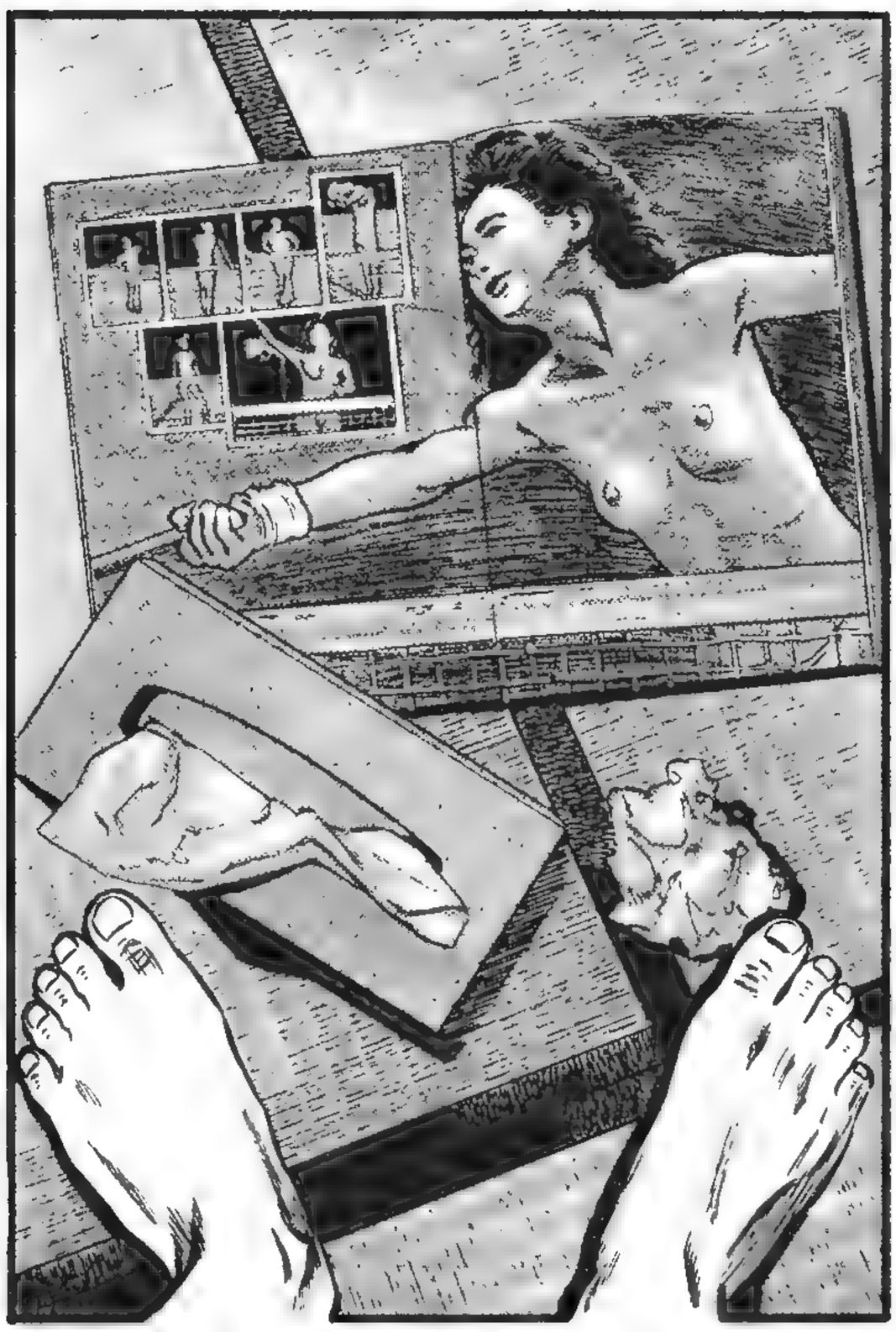
.....

SHFF

SHFF

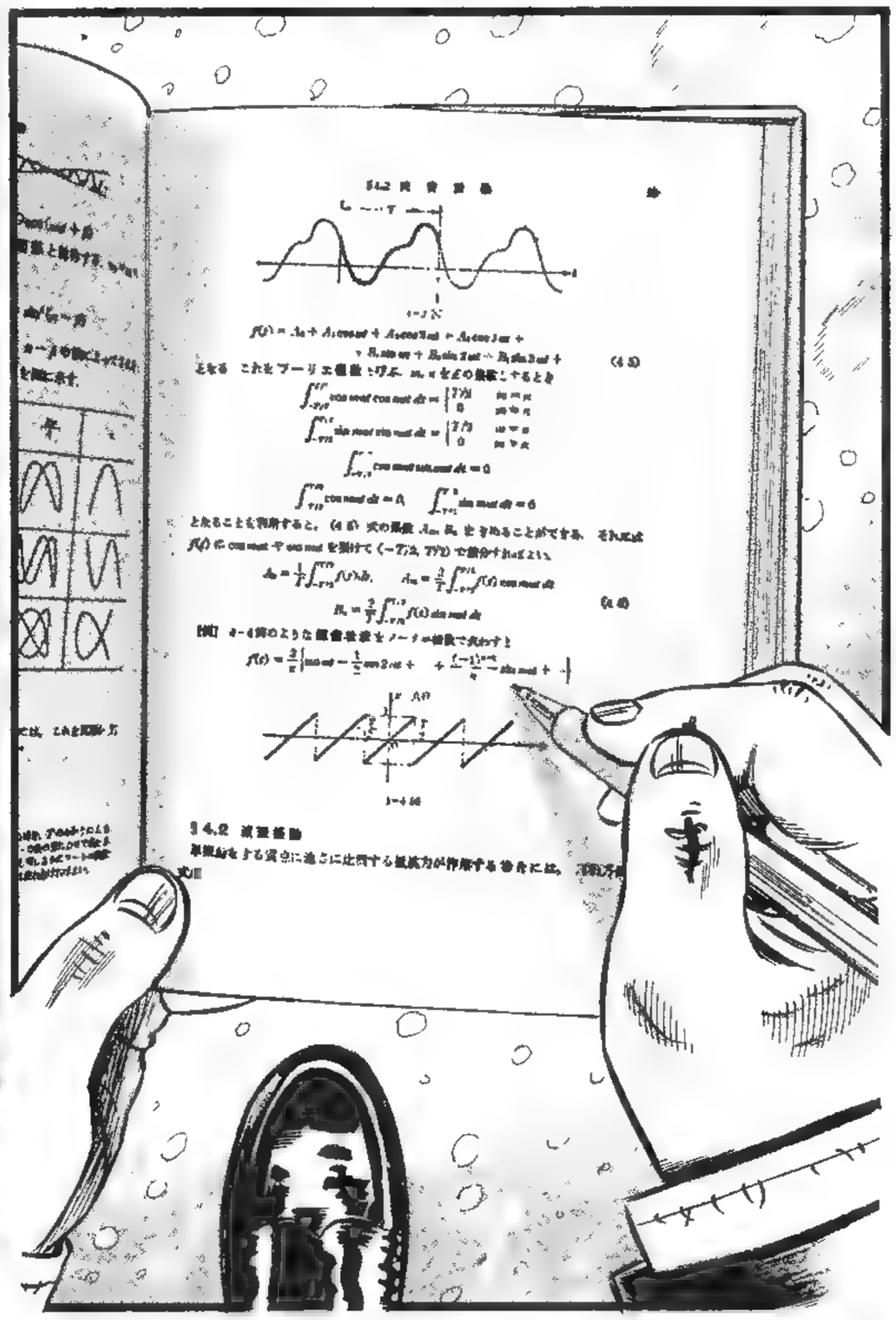
ハエが…

ハエ…



GORO

Chapter 2. 名詞節 (I)
He is innocent は完全な文であるが、He is innocent as usual は文の骨格にならない。しかし、He is innocent is certain. としてみると、文の骨格になれた。
nothing, as と感嘆疑問がまつわること。および that 以下と…
The first thing has nothing to do with him. ではあとの語句が…
The first thing is that a lie cannot be explained. The first thing における 名詞…
nothing as he used to でならわす このゆえ ほど…
FLY ON THE WALL
GET YOURSELF A CAMERA AND TAKE SOME PICS! THEY'LL NEVER KNOW!



Example 7.4.1 $\mathbb{R}^3 \to \mathbb{R}^3 \oplus \mathbb{R}^3 \oplus \mathbb{R}^1 \oplus \mathbb{R}^1 = \mathbb{R}I_0 \oplus \{\mathbb{R}I_1 \oplus \mathbb{R}I_2 \oplus \mathbb{R}I_3\} \oplus$
$\oplus \{\mathbb{R}I_1I_2 \oplus \mathbb{R}I_1I_3 \oplus \mathbb{R}I_2I_3\} \oplus \mathbb{R}I_1I_2I_3$

Every element $C \in \mathbb{R}^{2^n}$ has the following representation

$$C = \sum_{p=0}^{n} \left(\sum_{i_1,i_2,\ldots,i_p=1}^{n} x_{i_1 i_2 \ldots i_p} I_{i_1} I_{i_2} \ldots I_{i_p} \right) =$$

$$= \mathrm{Vec}^0(C) + \mathrm{Vec}^1(C) + \mathrm{Vec}^2(C) + \quad + \mathrm{Vec}^n(C),$$

where $\mathrm{Vec}^0(C) \equiv \mathrm{Sc}(C) \in \mathbb{R}^{C_n^0}$ is the scalar part of the Clifford number C, $\mathrm{Vec}^1(C) \in \mathbb{R}^{C_n^1}$ is its vector part, $\mathrm{Vec}^2(C) \in \mathbb{R}^{C_n^2}$ is its bivector part, and $\mathrm{Vec}^n(C) \in \mathbb{R}^{C_n^n}$ is its n-vector part.

If $C_1, C_2 \in \mathbb{R}^{2^n}$, then we can define their product as

$$C_1 C_2 = \left\{ \sum_{p=0}^{n} \sum_{i_1,i_2,\ldots,i_p=1}^{n} x_{i_1 i_2 \ldots i_p} I_{i_1} I_{i_2} \ldots I_{i_p} \right\} \circ$$

$$\circ \left\{ \sum_{q=0}^{n} \sum_{j_1,j_2,\ldots,j_q=1}^{n} y_{j_1 j_2 \ldots j_q} I_{j_1} I_{j_2} \ldots I_{j_q} \right\}$$

$$= \sum_{r=0}^{n} \sum_{k_1,k_2,\ldots,k_r=1}^{n} z_{k_1 k_2 \ldots k_r} I_{k_1} I_{k_2} \ldots I_{k_r},$$

where $I_{k_1} I_{k_2} \ldots I_{k_r}$ are obtained from products $I_{i_1} I_{i_2} \ldots I_{i_p} I_{j_1} I_{j_2} \ldots I_{j_q}$ by the [illegible] rules $I_i^2 = \delta$ and $I_i I_j = -I_j I_i$. There are 3^n possibilities for $i, j = 1, 2, \ldots, n$, $i \neq j$, $\delta = \pm 1$, $\forall i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$. Every possibility generates one algebra, so the space $\mathbb{R}^{2^n}$ with 3^n rules of multiplication forms 3^n algebras $\mathcal{A}_{2^n}^{p,q,r}(\mathbb{R})$, which are called *Clifford algebras*.

In the algebras $\mathcal{A}_{2^n}^{p,q,r}(\mathbb{R})$ we introduce the conjugation operation which maps the number C to the number $\overline{C}$. If the pseudodistance between two numbers A and B is defined as modulus of their difference

$$\rho(A, B) = |A - B| = \sqrt{(A - B)\overline{(A - B)}},$$

then the algebras $\mathcal{A}_{2^n}^{p,q,r}(\mathbb{R})$ are transformed into 2^n-D pseudometric spaces denoted as $\mathcal{CL}_{2^n}^{p,q,r}$.

The subspaces of pure vector Clifford numbers $x_1 I_1 + \quad + x_n I_n$, $\mathrm{vec}^1(\mathcal{A}_{2^n}^{p,q,r}(\mathbb{R}))$ are n-D spaces $\mathbb{R}^n = \mathcal{GR}_n^{p,q,r}$. The pseudometrics constructed in $\mathcal{CL}_{2^n}^{p,q,r}$ induces in $\mathcal{GR}_n^{p,q,r}$ the corresponding pseudometrics.

Chronic Surplus Countries and Monetary Mercantilism

Today, these basic difficulties have been worsened by a second feature of the global monetary system that Keynes also recognized in 1944 as a potential source of trouble. Some countries run international current account surpluses for reasons beyond their need to accumulate foreign currency reserves. For example, Japan has always thought of itself as a resource-poor country entirely dependent for its prosperity on favorable access to raw materials from overseas—energy, food, metals, and so on. In order to secure this access, the Japanese have striven to have their exports of manufactures to the rest of the world exceed their required imports of raw materials by a wide margin. So in addition to accumulating a large stock of foreign currency—dollar—reserves they have also tried to maintain a continuous margin of positive current account balance. Except for the oil-shock years between 1970 and 1980, Japan has seen large and steadily increasing current account surpluses (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Japan ($ millions)

Year	Current Account Surplus
1970	2,000
1975	(690)
1980	(10,750)
1985	49,170
1990	35,870
1995	111,044
2000	119,660
2001	87,798
2002	112,447
2003	136,215
2004	172,059
2005	165,783

Source: International Financial Statistics

DID SOMETHING TRAUMATIC HAPPEN TO MAKE ME CHANGE MY FACE?

DID I EVER FEEL TRULY REAL, EVEN BEFORE?

WAS THE "ME" BACK THEN CLOSER TO MY TRUE SELF?

NO.
THERE'S
NOTHING
HERE.

SO THAT'S IT, HUH?

ALL THIS TIME, YOU AND YOUR LIFE WERE JUST...

NOTHING.

NO FAILURES.

YOU HAD NO TRAUMA.

NO JOYS.

NO HOPES.

THAT'S WHY YOU CHANGED YOUR FACE, ISN'T IT?

BUT WHAT'D YOU EXPECT, IDIOT? YOU NEVER LOOKED PAST YOUR OWN TWO FEET.

SO SURE THAT YOUR WORLD WAS EMPTY BECAUSE OF YOUR LOOKS.

YOU WERE SO SURE THAT A BETTER FACE WOULD MAKE YOU COMPLETE.

BUT LOOK AT US NOW. LOOK AT *ME*.

NOTHING CHANGED AT ALL, DID IT?

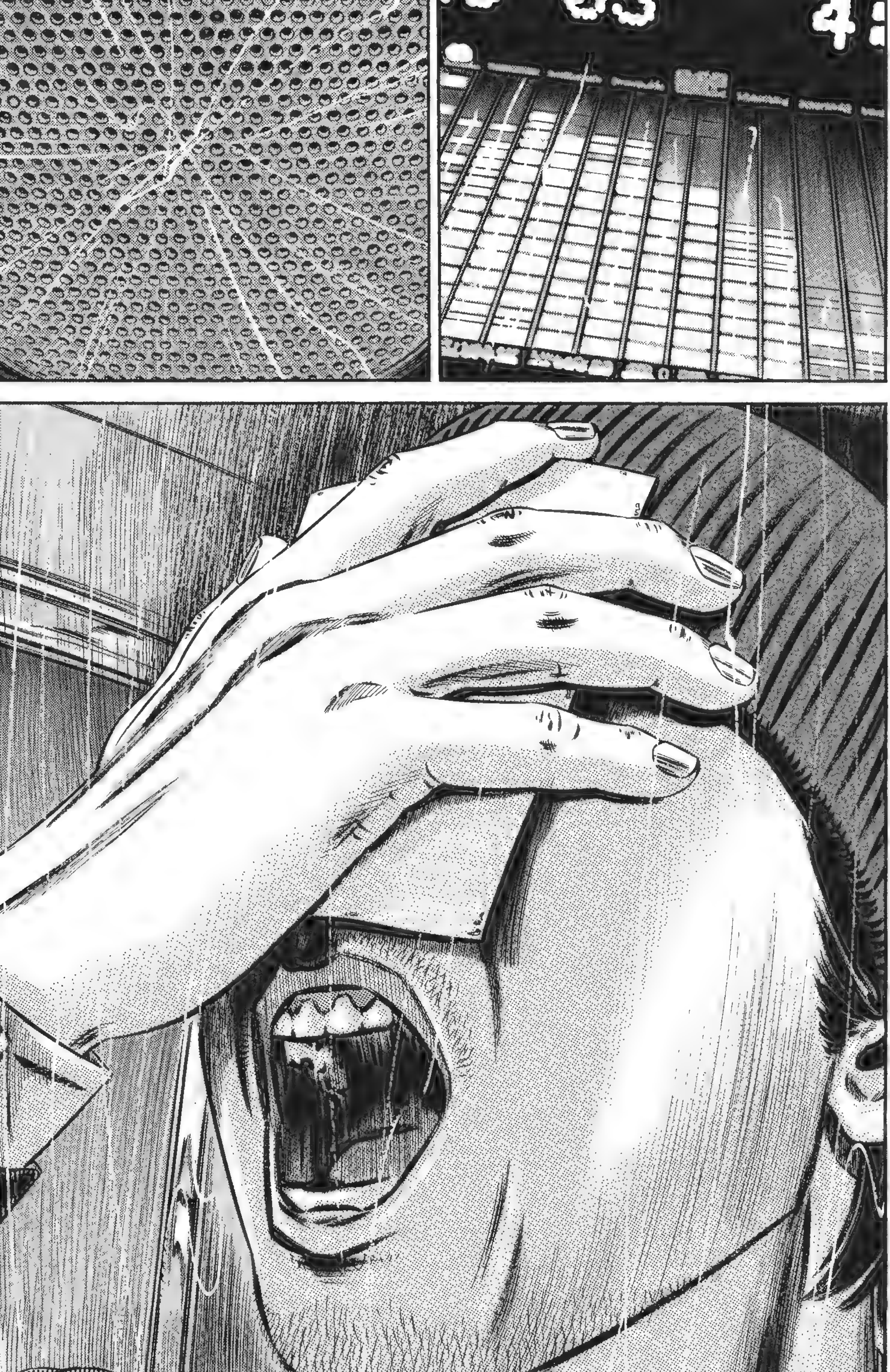
BUT WE'VE BOTH GOT THE SAME EXPRESSION, DON'T WE?

THE SHAPE OF YOUR FACE MIGHT BE DIFFERENT...

I THINK, ON SOME LEVEL, I KNEW ALL ALONG...

THAT I'VE NEVER REALLY CHANGED. NOT WHERE I SHOULD.

PRESS



LOOK AT ME!

TAKE INTEREST IN ME.

NOT IN MY FACE.

NOT IN MY MONEY ...

OR MY CAR.

AT ME!

LOOK ...

I AM HERE! I AM REAL!

I...

AM NOT INVIS-IBLE!

I...

AM NOT FACE-LESS!

I...

AM NOT A ZERO!

I...

¥0

LOOK AT ME!!

LOOK AT ME.

LOOK AT ME.

LOOK AT ME.

LOOK AT ME.

LOOK ...

AT ME...

PLEASE...

OH.

OH...

GRSH

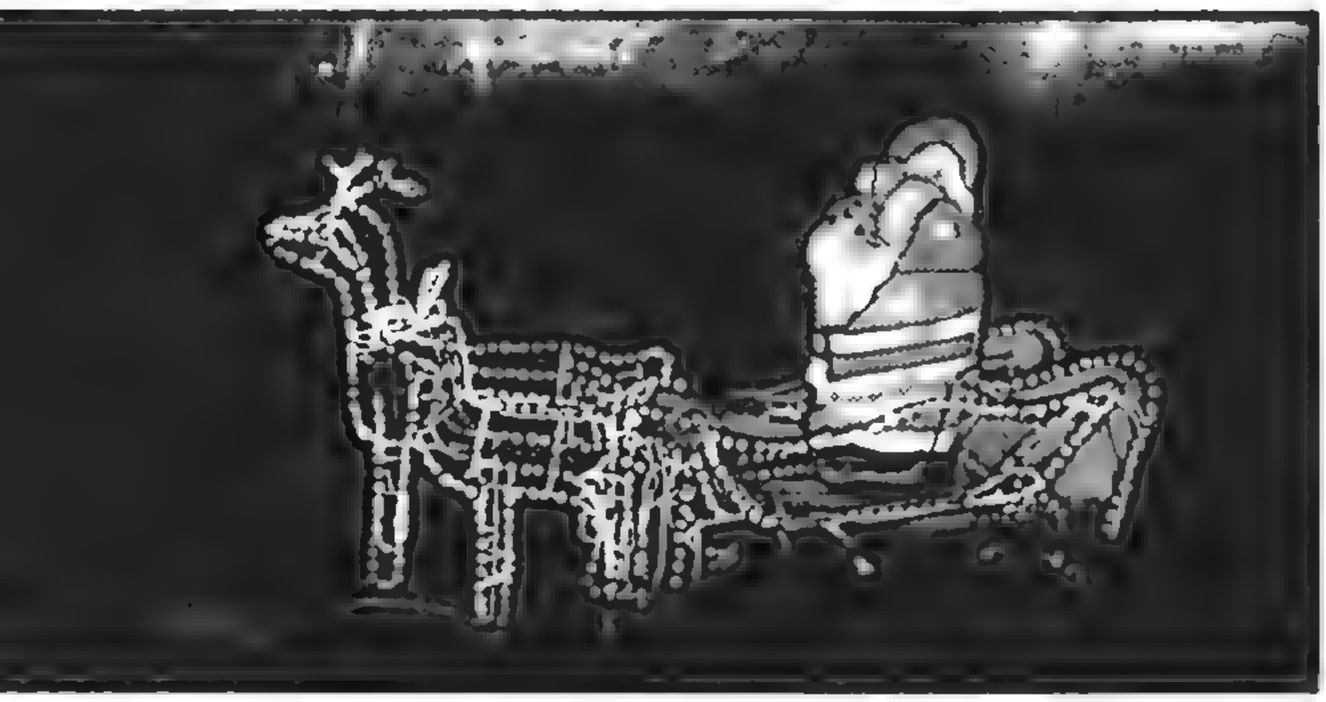
GRIP

FLING

THERE *WAS* SOME-ONE...

WHO SAW ME.

!



IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS ALREADY?

HUNH.

I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE.

IT'S FRIGGIN' COLD.

.....

ACHOO!

SHIII

FUEL

E 1/2 F

OH...

!

JINGLE...

JUST AN EMPTY TANK, HUH?

SO THAT'S IT.

.....

SHIT...

I CAN'T... DRIVE ANYWHERE...

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

.....

NOK

NOK

I'M KOZ

KOZ !!!

OPEN UP, *PLEEEASE!*

.....

DON'T WORRY. I'M NOT SHADY OR ANYTHING.

HERE.

TWO HUNDRED THOU.

ピッ

FWP

スキル SKRIIK

スキル SKRIIK

スキル SKRIIK

……?!

!

I WANT TO BUY IT OFF YOU. AS A KEEPSAKE.

FOR THE DRESS.

SMIRK

MIND GIVING ME A FORTY THOU DISCOUNT?

.....

THE WHOLE ENSEMBLE'S WORTH ABOUT TWO HUNDRED FORTY THOU.

I LOOKED IT UP ONLINE.

FANCY A WALK? MIGHT DO YOU SOME GOOD TO GET OUT OF THAT STUFFY CAR FOR A WHILE.

?

THIS PARK'S NOT THAT BAD IN THE WINTER.

IT USED TO MAKE ME NERVOUS SOMETIMES, YOU KNOW? LIKE I WAS LOST IN THIS SEA OF GREEN...

IT'S TOO HEAVY. THE PARK STARTS TO FEEL LIKE A MAZE WITH FOLIAGE FOR WALLS.

IT'S THE LEAVES, I THINK.

IN THE SUMMER, IT'S GREEN EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK.

.....?

!

BUT LOOK AT IT NOW.

IT'S SO WIDE. NO CLUTTER, JUST EMPTY SPACE AND THE OCCASIONAL DEAD STICK.

SO OPEN. LIKE IT STRETCHES ON FOREVER.

LIKE, YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEE WHERE YOU'RE STANDING, YOU KNOW?

ANYWAY...TURNS OUT I *DID* HAVE A PET GUPPY. IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

!

GO FIGURE.

I SEE.

DAD SAYS I WAS OBSESSED WITH IT.

HE ALSO SAID...I USED TO DRESS UP AS A GIRL.

.....

THE GUPPY LIKELY REPRESENTED BEAUTY ITSELF TO ME...

SO I WANTED TO EMULATE IT SOMEHOW.

MY DAD SAW ALL THAT, PANICKED, AND...KILLED THE LITTLE GUY.

HE APOLO-
GIZED FOR
IT TODAY.

!

?!

CAN YOU
BELIEVE THAT?
GUY WAITS
UNTIL HE HAS
SIX MONTHS
LEFT TO LIVE...

THAT'S WHAT
HE SAID. A
LIE, AS IT
TURNS OUT.

WHAT?

YOU SAID
HE JUST
BROKE A
BONE!

NOT FOR ME, BUT SO HE CAN DIE IN PEACE.

THAT'S WHY HE TOLD ME.

KILLING HIS SON'S BELOVED PET...THE GUILT MUST'VE GNAWED AT HIM FOR YEARS.

.....

I GUESS?

IT'S... PRETTY SELFISH OF HIM...

!

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?

YUP.

SELFISH, MESSED UP, AND SO, SO HUMAN.

.....

IT'S WILD. I'M FINALLY REALIZING MY DAD'S JUST...A PERSON.

!

.....!

ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS *THIS*...AND YOU SAW RIGHT THROUGH ME.

I'M STARTING TO WONDER IF MY LIFE HAS EVER FELT LIKE *MINE*...FELT TRULY **REAL.**

MY TRUE SELF ALL BUT LOST.

I'VE BEEN TRAPPED IN MY FATHER'S IMAGE, JUST LIKE IN YOUR SKETCH.

SO I'VE NEVER LACKED FOR FEMALE COMPANY, UNLIKE YOU.

.....

IT'S WEIRD. I MEAN, I WON THE GENETIC LOTTERY IN TERMS OF ATTRACTIVE-NESS...

LOOKS, MONEY...I'VE ALWAYS HAD EVERYTHING. YOU'D THINK I'D BE HAPPY.

AND YET...

I NEVER REALIZED IT, BUT DEEP DOWN...IT ALWAYS FELT SO *HOLLOW.*

BUT... I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY CLIMAXED WITH THEM.

FOR ONE THING... SO, I *HAVE* BEEN WITH GIRLS. *DUH.*

NO ONE THIS HOT WOULD BE A VIRGIN.

.....

SO MAYBE I *AM* A KIND OF VIRGIN!

I GUESS THAT'S WHY I RAN FROM 1775.

SHE PUSHED MY BUTTONS, AND I COULDN'T HANDLE THE FEELINGS IT INDUCED.

.....

I HAVE NO DESIRE WHATSOEVER TO SLEEP WITH *YOU.*

AND FOR THE RECORD, NAKOSHI-SAN...

I DON'T THINK GENDER DYSPHORIA IS THE ISSUE AT HAND.

THAT BEING SAID...

BUT...IF I EVER FEEL LIKE EXPERIMENTING WITH...SOME-THING *LIKE* THAT SOMEDAY...

I WON'T REPRESS IT ANYMORE.

THE CONSTRICTING INFLUENCE MY FATHER HAD OVER ME IS GONE.

FROM NOW ON, I'M GOING TO TRY AND LIVE MORE AUTHENTICALLY.

AND PERHAPS, IN TIME...I'LL FIND MY TRUE SHAPE.

SAY...

!

WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE TO YOU NOW?

!

SO THAT'S IT.

THAT'S WHY HIS WATER HASN'T TRANSFERRED TO ME.

?!

YOUR HOMUN-CULUS HASN'T VANISHED QUITE YET.

SHF!...

.....?

OVER TIME, YOUR REAL BODY WILL SWALLOW IT UP...

IT'S ALL RIGHT. THERE'S NO RUSH.

.....

EVEN IF IT TAKES SURGERY.

SMIRK

SURGERY, HUH?

YOU KNOW...THAT DOESN'T SOUND TOO BAD.

HEY...

!

I FINALLY REALIZED WHY I CHOSE YOU IN PARTICULAR, BY THE WAY.

.....?

BUT NOW I FINALLY GET IT.

THIS WHOLE TIME, I COULDN'T PUT MY FINGER ON WHY--OUT OF ALL THE POTENTIAL GUINEA PIGS I HAD AT MY DISPOSAL-- IT JUST HAD TO BE *YOU*.

AND, BY EXTENSION, HOW ONE MIGHT SURGICALLY *ALTER* THAT FORM--THAT INTERESTED ME AS WELL.

SO, OF COURSE, THE HUMAN *FORM*...

I'VE STUDIED HUMAN BEINGS EXTENSIVELY, FROM EVERY ANGLE.

LIVING OUT OF HIS CAR. TRAPPED IN LIMBO BETWEEN WEALTH AND WANT.

I WAS JUST TAKING INTEREST IN THIS FIELD WHEN I SAW *YOU*, A MAN WHO'D UNDER-GONE SUCH A SURGERY...

!

NAKOSHI-SAN...

IF YOU'VE HAD COSMETIC SURGERY...

HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY BE *HERE*, LIVING THE WAY YOU DO?

MEANING ...?

?!

.....

HOW COULD SOMEONE WHO'D BEEN UNDER THE KNIFE WIND UP IN YOUR SITUATION?

SO HOW?

COSMETIC SURGERY IS SOMETHING PEOPLE DO TO BECOME HAPPY, RIGHT? AND TO RAISE THEIR SOCIAL STATUS.

IN HINDSIGHT, I THINK I HARBORED SOME LATENT ANXIETY OVER MY APPEARANCE...

SOME HOPE I DIDN'T KNOW I NEEDED.

6

LIPOSUCTION AND INJECTION

AND MY STUDIES BROUGHT THAT PART OF ME...

A FOUR-WHEELED SQUATTER WITH A PLASTIC FACE.

AND THEN I FOUND YOU.

A MAN SILENTLY RUMINATING OVER COUNTLESS QUESTIONS.

A MAN WHO TELLS NOTHING BUT LIES.

I *HAD* TO STUDY YOU.

MY REPRESSED INSECURITIES TURNED INTO INTEREST.

HOW DID SOMEONE LIKE YOU, WHO HAD THE DESIRE AND MEANS TO UNDERGO PLASTIC SURGERY, WIND UP HOMELESS?

SO... WHAT'S THE STORY?

!

WHAT IS A HUMAN BEING?

PARDON ?!

.....!

YOU'VE BEEN STUDYING US FOR YEARS, RIGHT? SO... GIMME A DEFINITION.

SPARE ME THE POSTURING.

AT THE END OF THE DAY...WHO KNOWS?

A HUMAN BEING...

IS JUST "FORM."

!

ANYONE WHO PREACHES ABOUT "SOULS" OR "INNER BEAUTY" IS FULL OF SHIT.

TRUTH IS, OUR PHYSICAL FORM IS ALL WE HAVE.

EYES, EARS, NOSE, SKIN, TONGUE-- THEY'RE THE ONLY WAY WE CAN EXPERIENCE THE WORLD.

WITHOUT THEM, WE'D BE NUMB. SEVERED FROM SOCIETY.

"HUMANITY" WOULDN'T EXIST.

SURE, MAYBE THERE'S SOME KIND OF "SOUL" AT THE HELM, BUT STILL--WITHOUT OUR BODIES...

IF YOU CANNOT SPEAK, YOU CANNOT LIE.

IF YOU HAVE NO BODY, YOU CAN DO NO HARM.

IF THOSE AROUND YOU HAD NO EYES, YOU WOULDN'T CRAVE THEIR GAZE.

LOATHE ANY PART OF OUR-SELVES THAT'S A CENTIMETER TOO BIG, TOO SMALL, TOO *ANYTHING.*

BECAUSE WE HAVE BODIES, WE AGONIZE OVER BLEMISHES ONLY A FEW MILLIMETERS WIDE.

AND THE LOSS OF ONE TOOTH THROWS US INTO A TAILSPIN.

BUT EXTRA MILLIMETERS IN THE *NOSE* TURN US OFF.

EYES JUST MILLIMETERS LARGER THAN AVERAGE DRAW THE GAZE...

WHILE A MAN A FEW CENTIMETERS TOO SHORT IS COMPLETELY IGNORED.

A WOMAN CENTIMETERS SLIMMER THAN MOST IS OGLED...

IT IS BECAUSE OF OUR BODIES THAT WE SUFFER.

?!

IT IS BECAUSE OF MY *SHAPE* THAT I SUFFER!

OR, AT LEAST...

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT BEFORE I GOT THE SURGERY.

.....

YOU REMEMBERED YOUR OLD LIFE?

RUSTLE

YEAH.

!

DROP...

?

SHF

WHAT ...?

!

KRNKL

KRNKL

WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKE YOU HATE THAT FACE SO MUCH?

.....

HUNH. YOU WERE NOWHERE NEAR AS UGLY AS I IMAGINED.

NOTHING AT ALL.

SORRY?

NOTHING BAD HAPPENED... EVER.

NO ONE CARED ABOUT ME. NO ONE PAID ATTENTION TO ME. NO ONE EVEN *LOOKED* AT ME.

I JUST... WASN'T **SPECIAL.**

LIKE A REGULAR MR. CELLOPHANE.

NOTHING OF SUBSTANCE TO HIM.

EVERY NOW AND THEN, SOMEONE'S GAZE WOULD SWEEP ME OVER BY CHANCE, BUT I COULD FEEL THEIR DISINTEREST LIKE A KNIFE IN THE GUT.

IT WAS LIKE EVERYONE I PASSED WAS SILENTLY LAUGHING AT ME.

SO, OVER TIME, I STARTED LOOKING DOWN TO HIDE MY FACE.

I WALKED WITH MY EYES ON THE GROUND, SHUTTING OTHER PEOPLE OUT.

STARING DOWN AT HIS OWN TWO FEET, DAY AFTER DAY.

THAT'S ALL I WAS. JUST SOME GLOOMY LOSER...

TRAUMA? I WASN'T *INTERESTING* ENOUGH TO HAVE TRAUMA. I FELT NOTH-ING, GOOD OR BAD.

HMPH. OF *COURSE* NOTHING "HAPPENED."

NO WONDER I DIDN'T FEEL REAL.

I KEPT MY GAZE GLUED TO THE GROUND OUT OF FEAR...

AND WANDERED LIKE A LOST SOUL, ISOLATED IN A VOID OF MY OWN MAKING...

GLANCING UP OCCASIONALLY ONLY TO GLARE AT THE **HAVES.** THE ONES WITH LOVE, ACCLAIM, POPULARITY, FAME...

I WAS JUST A JEALOUS **HAVE-NOT** STEWING IN SILENT VITRIOL.

THE MORE ONE OF THE HAVES GUSHED ABOUT "INNER BEAUTY," THE MORE INSULTS I THREW AT THEM IN MY HEAD. DAMN HYPOCRITES, THINKING THEY'RE BETTER THAN ME OVER A FEW MILLIMETERS.

AND THEN I'D LOOK BACK AT MY FEET AND KEEP ON WALKING...

TAKING GREAT CARE TO NEVER LET THE EMOTIONAL SEESAW OF MY MIND SWING TOO FREELY.

!

ON MY FACE.

I BLAMED THE EMPTINESS I FELT...

PEOPLE WOULD PAY ATTENTION TO ME. I'D BE POPULAR. EVERYTHING WOULD FINALLY BE **REAL.**

I THOUGHT IF I WAS MORE ATTRACTIVE, I'D BE ABLE TO WALK WITH MY HEAD HELD HIGH.

OF COURSE I DID.

SO YOU THOUGHT A NEW FACE WOULD BRING YOU FULFILL-MENT?

YEAH.

SO YOU BOUGHT YOURSELF ONE.

AND IT WORKED... ON THE SURFACE. WOMEN'S HEADS BEGAN TO TURN. I WAS SWIMMING IN ACTION, GOT THE BEST JOB A GUY COULD ASK FOR, GOT FILTHY RICH.

MY LIFE WAS FULL OF BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS.

?

Hee hee hee!

BUT IT DIDN'T MAKE YOUR LIFE FEEL ANY LESS HOLLOW, DID IT?

NO.

ANY TIME I KISSED A WOMAN, I COULDN'T TELL IF THEY WERE KISSING *ME*.

THEY DIDN'T TOUCH ME LIKE A PERSON. THEY HANDLED ME LIKE SOME KINDA BRAND-NAME OBJECT.

EVEN OTHERS' KINDNESS WASN'T AIMED AT *ME*. IT WAS LIKE THEY WERE WHISPERING SWEET NOTHINGS STRAIGHT INTO MY WALLET.

THEIR EYES WERE POINTED IN MY DIRECTION, BUT THEY WEREN'T FOCUSED ON ME.

WHAT WERE THEY REALLY LOOKING AT? SOMETHING FAR BEHIND ME? MAYBE THE AIR IN FRONT OF ME...?

HONESTLY, I'M NOT SURE THEY EVEN KNEW I EXISTED.

FUCKERS ACTED LIKE I WAS INVISIBLE!

BEFORE I KNEW IT, I WAS A HABITUAL LIAR.

AFTER A FEW YEARS OF THAT, I STARTED DOUBTING MY OWN EYES.

AND EVENTUALLY, I WAS EVEN LYING TO MYSELF.

NOTHING IN THAT PLACE FELT REAL. I SURE AS HELL DIDN'T.

I HAD TO CAST IT ALL ASIDE AND RUN FAR AWAY.

SO I PANICKED. GOT RID OF EVERYTHING-- THE MONEY, THE MATERIAL SHIT, THE FANCY APARTMENT...

AH. SO *THAT'S* HOW YOU ENDED UP STUCK IN-BETWEEN.

YUP.

SINCE IT'S AT-TACHED AND ALL.

WELL, YES. THAT'D BE TOUGH.

BUT I STILL COULDN'T LOSE THIS DAMN *FACE*.

SO, IN SUM...

ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT THE LIFE YOU THOUGHT YOU WANTED WAS HOLLOW AND FULL OF LIES. CORRECT?

YOU MADE YOURSELF HOTTER AND GOT THE ATTENTION YOU CRAVED...

NO ONE IN THAT WORLD EVER REALLY LOOKED AT ME.

I WAS JUST AS GLOOMY AND ALONE AS I WAS WHEN MY EYES WERE GLUED TO THE GROUND.

YEAH.

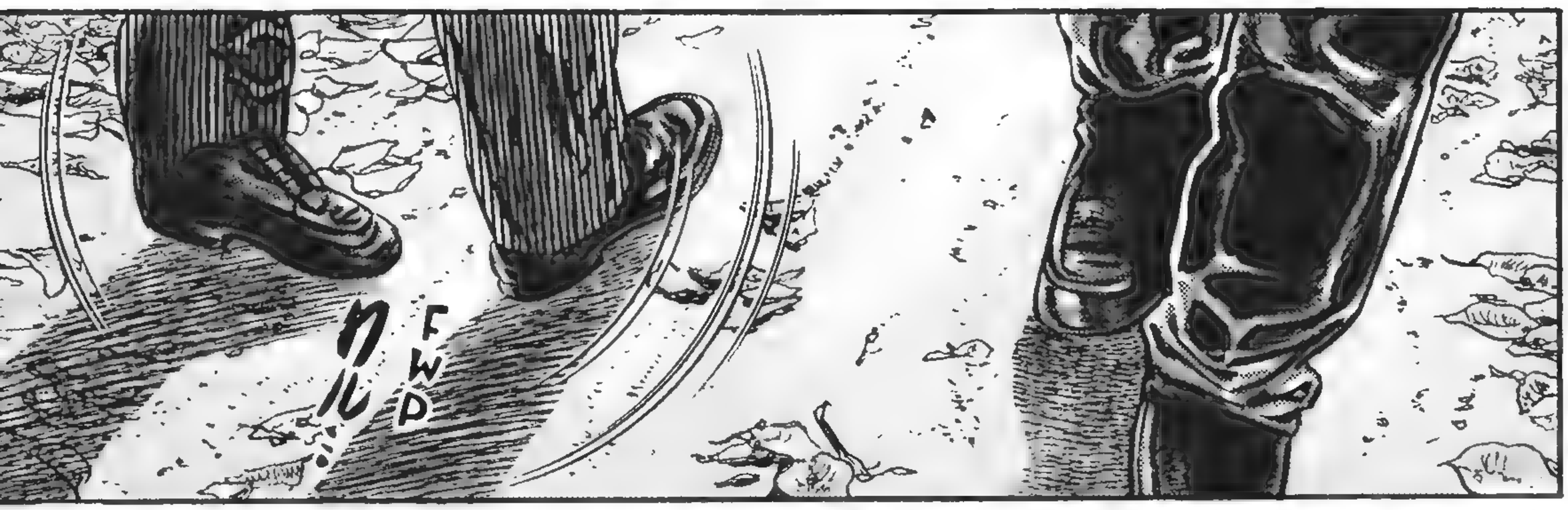
I HAD NOTHING THEN.

I'VE GOT NOTHING NOW.

FOR THIRTY-FOUR WHOLE YEARS...

HAVE I REALLY BEEN... *NOTHING...?*

WHERE DO I HAVE TO GO TO FIND *ME?*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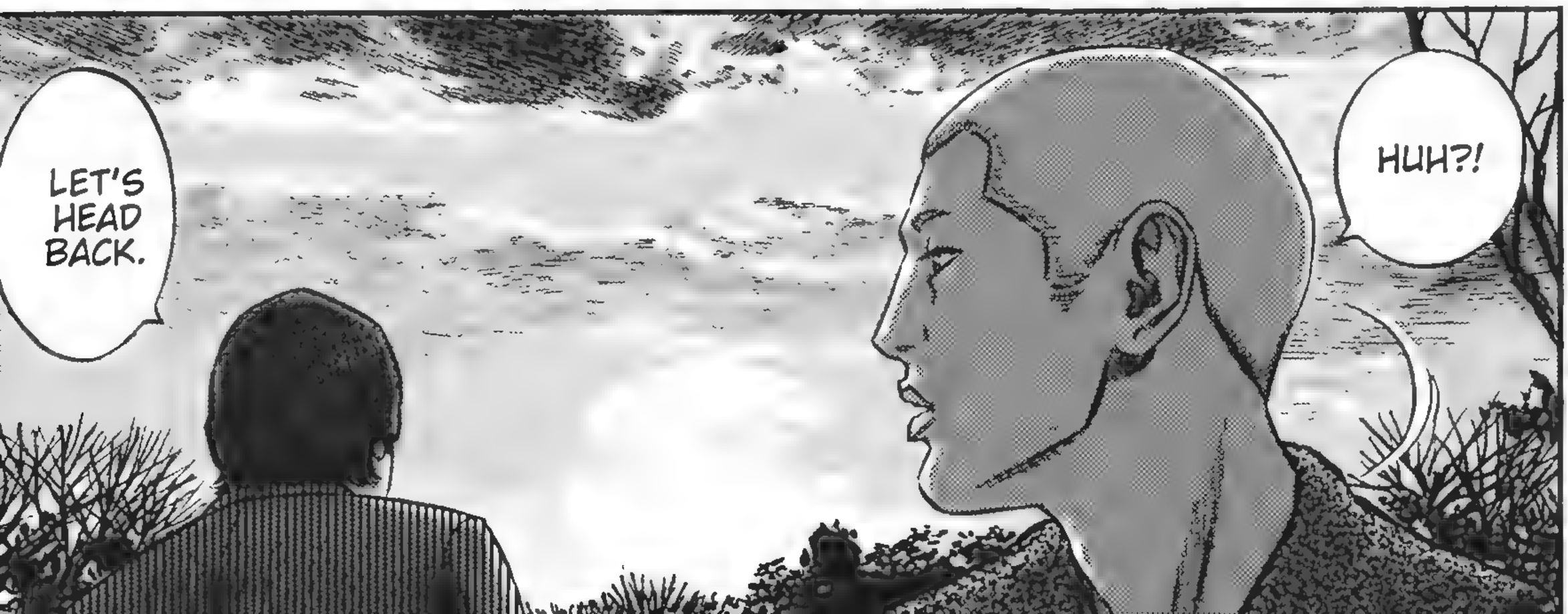

LET'S HEAD BACK.
HUH?!

I'M SICK OF STARING AT MY OWN SHADOW.

.....!

YOU KNOW, THERE WAS A MOMENT...

?

!!

ONE FLEETING MOMENT WHERE I FELT REAL.

REALLY? WHEN?

WELL... I THOUGHT ABOUT SURGERY FOR MONTHS.

BUT I KEPT GOING BACK AND FORTH ON IT...

AND JUST WHEN I WAS TRYING TO WORK OUT WHO I WAS...

NOT SURE IF I COULD THROW AWAY THE FACE I'D HAD OR THE PERSON I'D BEEN FOR SO LONG.

A PERSON WHO REALLY *SAW* ME APPEARED.

I WAS UGLY AND GLOOMY, MY HEAD HANGING DOWN...YET SHE WAS KIND ENOUGH TO ACTUALLY LOOK AT ME.

!

AND IN THAT MOMENT...I WAS REAL.

WHAT WAS SHE LIKE?

SHE COULD SEE HOMUNCULI.

!

YUP.

YOU KNEW A WOMAN WHO COULD SEE WHAT YOU SEE NOW?

SO, THIS WOMAN...

SHE COULD SEE THE DISTORTIONS OF THE HUMAN HEART, THEN?

IN THE FORM OF SYMBOLIC MONSTERS?

YOU NEVER TOLD ME THAT.

.....

PRETTY MUCH.

IT WAS LIKE X-RAY VISION. SHE'D SEE RIGHT THROUGH PEOPLE'S MASKS AND INTO THEIR TWISTED CORES.

YEAH.

FOR THREE WHOLE MONTHS...

WERE YOU TWO ROMANTICALLY INVOLVED?

SHE STAYED BY MY SIDE... AND MADE ME VISIBLE.

SHP

IX

?

SO WHAT'D SHE SEE IN YOU, NAKOSHI-SAN?

!

WHAT TYPE OF HOMUN-CULUS, I MEAN.

ACTUALLY ...

.....

LET ME GUESS. CYBORG ARM AND SANDY FEET?

GRIN

BACK THEN, SHE SAID I WAS...

AFTER ALL THIS, YOU'RE STILL KEEPING SECRETS?!

NO WAY!

WHA ?!

NEVER MIND. IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

NOPE.

COME ON, SPILL!! PRETTY PLEASE? CHERRY ON TOP?

NOT A CHANCE.

AWW, HAVE A HEART, NAKOSHI-SAN!

大麦焼酎

WELL, THANK YA KINDLY, CAR GUY! FEELIN' GENEROUS TODAY, EH?

WHOA! TWO WHOLE BOTTLES?

PACHINKO?

YOU SAID YOU BET ON HORSE RACES, NOT--

YUP. HIT A LUCKY STREAK AT PACHINKO TODAY.

TUG

ALWAYS LYIN' 'IS TEETH OFF.

!

LET THE BOY TELL HIS TALES.

IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE.

HYEH HEH HEH HEH!

.....

OH, THE PONYTAIL GIRL? YEAH, SHE WAS REAL CUTE!

THAT LI'L DARLIN' VOLUNTEERIN' AT THE SOUP KITCHEN TODAY WAS SOMETHIN' ELSE, HUH?

IT WAS A HELLUVA RIDE!

SHOOT, I BEEN WITH GIRLS THAT CUTE WHEN I WAS YOUNGER! TWO 'ER THREE OF 'EM!

I'D GIVE MY LEFT NUT FOR A NIGHT WITH A GAL LIKE THAT!

LORD, WAS SHE PURDY.

KEH KEH KEH KEH KEH!

LIKELY STORY. IN YER DREAMS, MAYBE.

I'M SERIOUS! THEY WAS REAL, I TELL YA!

!

YOU'VE BROKEN THE HEARTS OF QUITE A FEW BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN YOUR TIME, HAVEN'T YOU, CAR GUY?

.....

YOU'RE QUITE THE LOOKER, AFTER ALL.

I'VE BEEN WITH WOMEN WHO LOOKED LIKE SUPERMODELS. SO MANY OF 'EM I COULD HURL.

!

SUPER-MODELS ?!

HNUGH ?!

KEH KEH KEH KEH KEH!

NO GAL THAT PURDY WOULD BE CAUGHT DEAD IN A BEAT-UP CAR LIKE YERS!

PUH. THERE HE GOES AGAIN!

WHO YA THINK YER FOOLIN'?

WAS UGLY AS HELL.

AN ABSOLUTE HAG.

OUT OF ALL THE WOMEN I'VE BEEN WITH, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ONE...

BUT...

A...

A HAG ?!

WAS IT SOMETHIN' SHE DID IN THE SACK? THE SHAPE OF HER HOLE?

THAT DON'T MAKE SENSE. WHAT WAS SO GREAT ABOUT HER?

TH...THE HOTTEST GAL YOU EVER LAID WAS... *UGLY...?*

NAH. IT'S MORE LIKE... ALL THOSE PRETTY, EMPTY DOLLS JUST...

DON'T EXPERIENCE THE WORLD THE SAME WAY UGLY GIRLS DO, YOU KNOW?

THAT UGLY WOMAN COULD SEE YOUR *ENTIRE* HEART.

SHE COULD SEE HEARTS?!

!

SHE *WHAT* ?!

HWAH ?!

ALL SHE HAD TO DO WAS LOOK AT YOU, AND SHE COULD READ YOUR HEART AS CLEAR AS DAY.

YUP.

NO, IT WASN'T JUST PEOPLE WATCHING. IT WENT DEEPER THAN THAT.

SO? ANYONE WITH HALF A BRAIN CAN DO THAT.

YA JUST *KNOW!*

YOU CAN SEE WHO'S CHILL AND WHO'S A PRICK, EASY! DON'T EVEN NEED TO TALK TO 'EM.

SHE COULD SEE THE ESSENCE OF YOUR SOUL-- SO CLEARLY IT WAS ALMOST MAGICAL.

SO, THIS GIRL OF YOURS...

!

HOW DID SHE DO IT? SEE PEOPLE'S SOULS, I MEAN.

SIGH...

.....?

.....

FUU...

.....

!

FWP

THE DISTORTIONS OF A PERSON'S MIND WOULD KIND OF...

MANIFEST AS THESE WEIRD, *UH*... SORT OF...

IT WAS LIKE...

THEIR HEARTS WERE...

THESE, *UH*...

NO, NOT QUITE. IT WAS LIKE...

SHE WAS ONE'A THEM MEDIUMS, RIGHT? OR A PSYCHIC OR WHATEVER?

AH, I GETCHA.

SHE SOUNDS SICK IN THE HEAD!

THAT AIN'T *MAGIC*, THAT'S CALLED BEIN' *NUTS!*

HOLD UP! SO THIS GIRLFRIEND UH YERS SAW SHIT THAT WEREN'T *THERE*?!

WH-WHAT?

GLARE...

TUG

MAYBE IT *WAS* JUST AN ILLNESS. WHO'S TO SAY?

.....

!

SO, THIS MAGICAL EX-GIRLFRIEND-- WHAT'D SHE DO FOR A LIVIN'?

SHE WORKED WITH OUTREACH PROGRAMS. SPENT HER DAYS SPOONING OUT FOOD AT SOUP KITCHENS.

SMIRK

O... OUTREACH PROGRAMS ...?

!

!

SOUP KITCHENS ...?

FWAH

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK. I GOTTA TAKE A LEAK.

SHOVE

BETCHA NOT A *WORD* A'THAT WAS TRUE.

PFFT. SUCKER'S BET.

HE BRINGS US BOOZE, DON'T HE?

HE DON'T MEAN NO HARM.

AW, LEAVE THE KID ALONE.

KEH KEH KEH KEH KEH!

DID HE TELL YA ABOUT HIS "SKY ANGEL"? THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT?

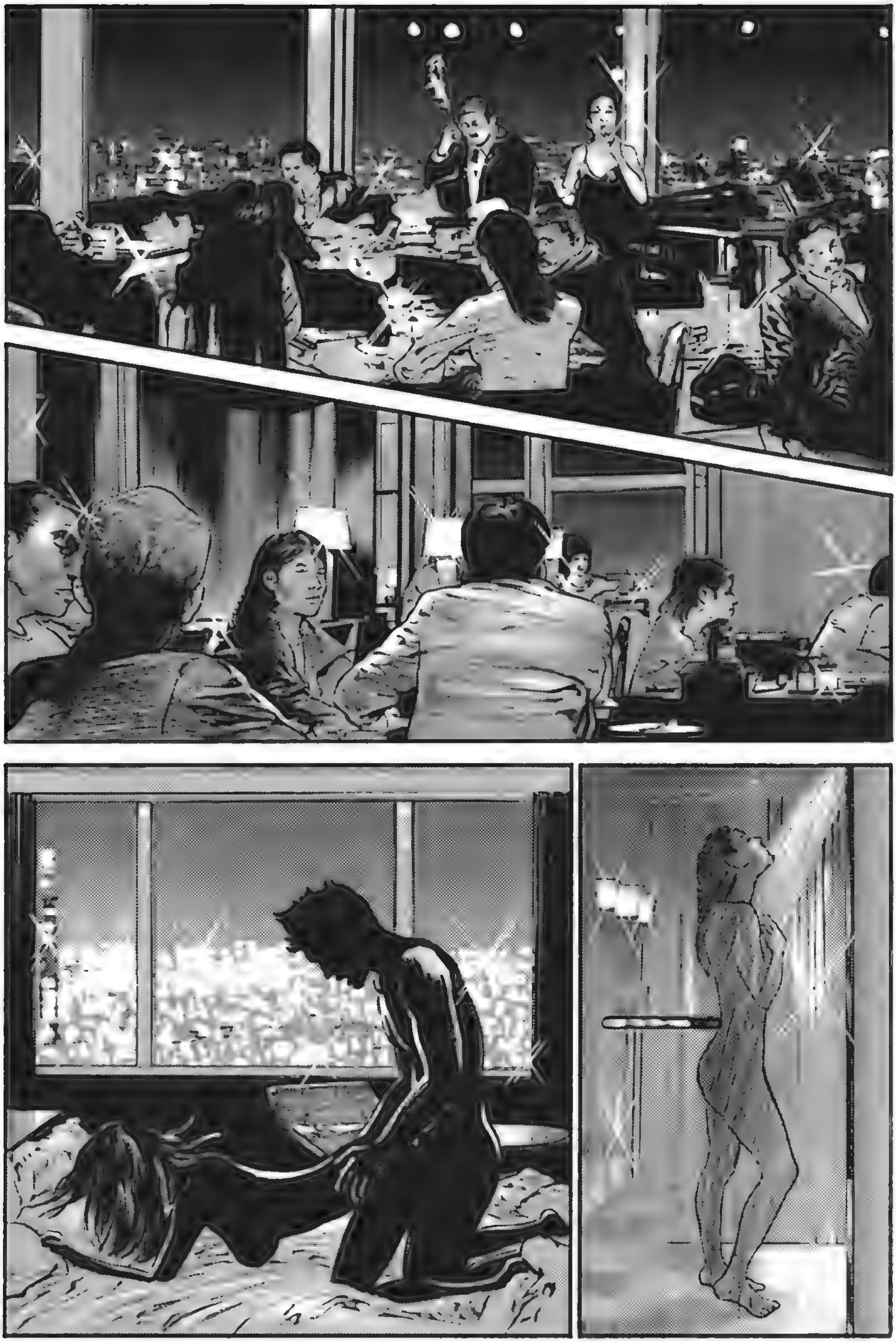
FLIGHT ATTENDANTS, MODELS, PSYCHICS... IT AIN'T JUST LYIN, IT'S *PSYCHOSIS.*

.....

HIC!

HIC!

BA-TNK



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RMB
RMB
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NGH ...

NNnnnn

KA-CHAK

!

"YOU LOOK LIKE A CLOUD, NAKO-CHAN.

"JUST LIKE A CLOUD!"

"YET INSCRUTABLE. ALWAYS CHANGING SHAPE.

"ALL PURE AND WHITE AND INNOCENT ...

MY LEG...

MY ARM...

A CLOUD, HUH? THAT'S NOT WHAT I SEE IN THE MIRROR.

PRESS

SUCH TWISTED ...

THEY'VE BECOME ...

HM?

WHAT THE...??

HUH...?

THEY'RE *GONE?*

TH...

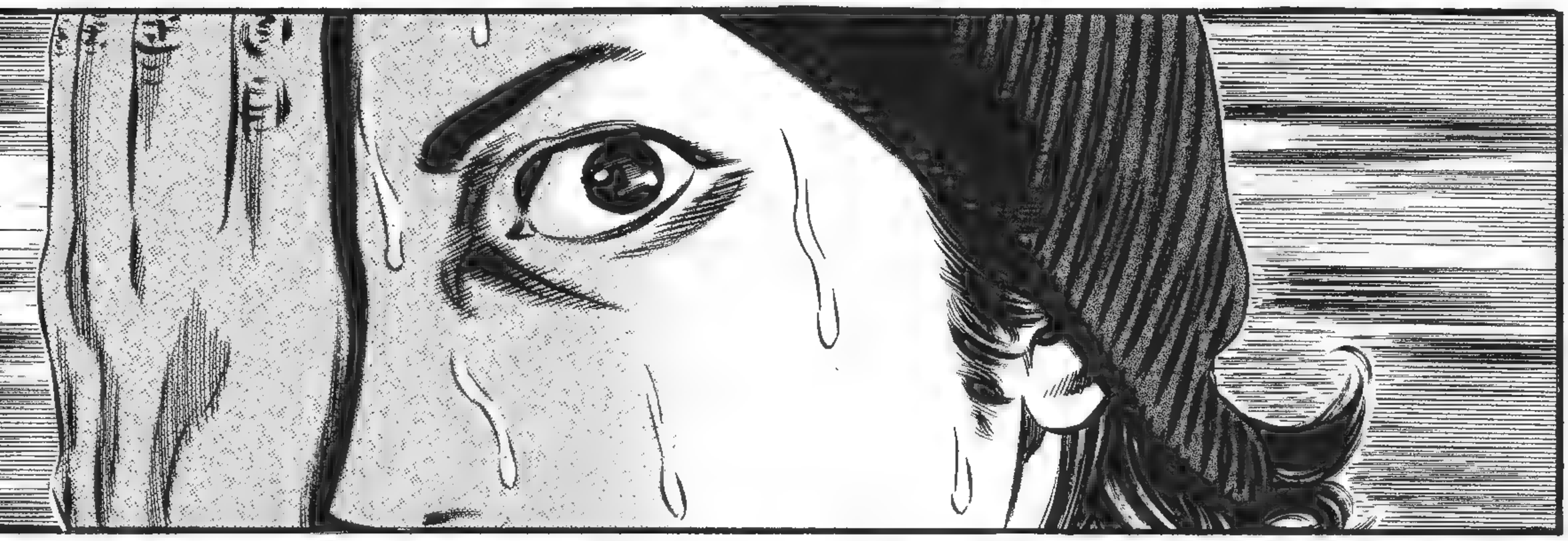
WHP

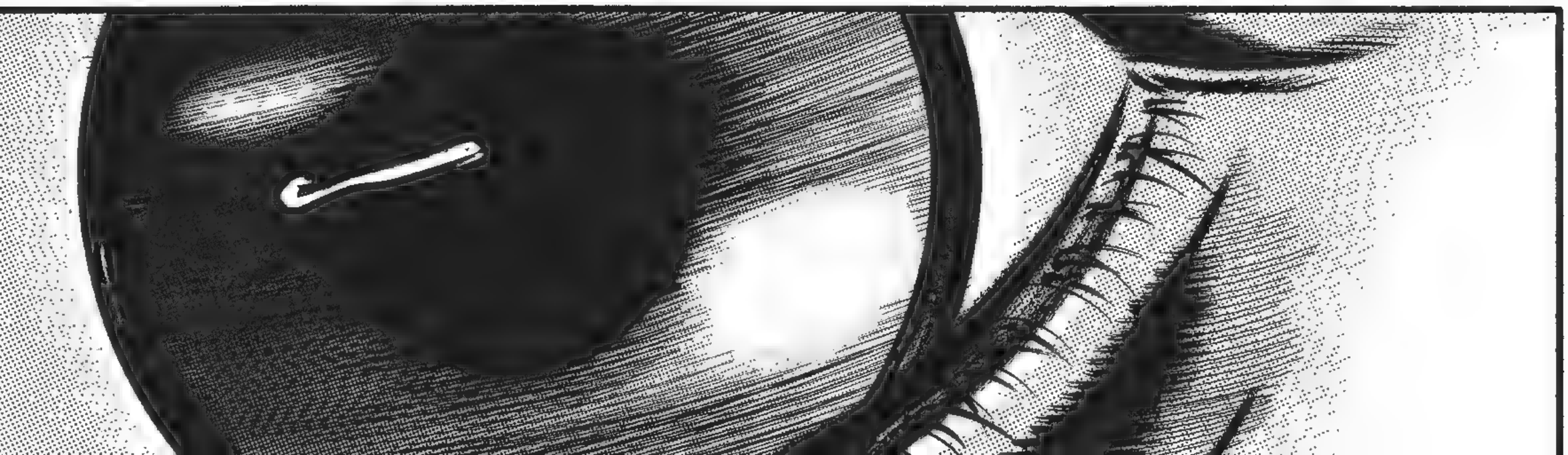
WH...

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

DMP

WHP!!!





HUUUH!
HUUUH!
HUUUH!
HUUUH!
HUUUH!

TH-THIS...
H-HOLD ON...
CAN'T BE HAPPENING!
ポタ
PLIP
ポタ
PLIP
ポタ
PLIP
ポタ
PLIP

YOU BASTARDS! YOU CAN'T VANISH ON ME NOW! IF YOU DO...

BACK TO LIVING A LIE IN THAT...THAT *LIMBO!*

BACK TO...THAT DAMN *FICTION.*

I'LL BE BACK TO SQUARE ONE...

YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME HERE ALONE!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

.....

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

WHY CAN'T I SEE THEM?

WHY AREN'T THEY *THERE?*

WAIT!

.....

RUB RUB

MAYBE THE HOLE SEALED BACK UP OR SOMETHING!

JY! KLAK

NAKOSHI-SAN...?

.....?

AH!

NAKOSHI-SAN...

IS IT REALLY YOU?

HIROMI-CHAN! FROM FERRIS U.

H...

HEY...

MY GOODNESS, IT'S BEEN *FOREVER!*

UH, WELL...

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN, NAKOSHI-SAN? ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU STOPPED ANSWERING MY CALLS...

HUH?

.....

DID SOME-THING HAPPEN?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?

SCRITCH SCRITCH

L...

LONG STORY...

!

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR PORSCHE?

Magazine Yinling

.....?

Singer

……

GLANCE

ジ…

PEER

ピ！

!

PFFT!

OH!

HIROMI-CHAAAN!

BE RIGHT THERE!

TOTALLY!

READY TO GO?

!

WELL, NAKOSHI-SAN...

LATER! ♪

TO RU RU RU RU RU

BIP BIP BIP BIP

WHP

HEY!

WHAT THE *FUCK* IS GOING ON?!!

GA-CHK

HELLO, ITO SPEAKING.

Call i process
Ito

Functions Call Message

P5041

OH, GREAT. WHAT IS IT *NOW?*

WAIT, SO YOU CAN'T SEE THEM ANYMORE? LIKE, AT *ALL*?

THAT'S WONDERFUL! CONGRATULA-TIONS! ♪

?!

WHAT ...?

THAT MEANS YOUR EMOTIONAL ISSUES HAVE BEEN FIXED, RIGHT?

!

ARE YOU KIDDING? I HAVEN'T SOLVED *SHIT!*

WE SHOULD GRAB A DRINK TO CELEBRATE!

GOOD FOR YOU, MAN. GOOD! FOR! YOU! ♪ ♪

.....?

BUT I'VE GOT A FEELING IT'S SOMETHING MORE... PHYSICAL THAN THAT.

I'M NOT CERTAIN WHAT MADE THEM VANISH...

THIS SUCKER'S GONE AND SEALED UP ON ME.

MY GUESS IS...

STILL SOUNDS LIKE GOOD NEWS TO ME!

HA HA!

!

WHATEVER THE CAUSE, THIS MEANS THAT YOUR AWFUL VISIONS ARE FINALLY GONE.

Salary man (pretty fat)

Becomes thin and wobbly.

Maybe two centimeters thick?

Head is a fish.

SMIRK

ニヤ…

THOUGH... THEY *DO* SAY YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE *GOT* UNTIL IT'S *GONE*.

!

……

AREN'T YOU HAPPY? THIS IS GREAT!

COME ON, NAKOSHI-SAN!

FEELING LONELY WITHOUT YOUR IMAGINARY FRIENDS?

!

PARDON ??

DRILL ANOTHER ONE!

TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP

I'M NOT DOING SOMETHING THAT RISKY!

WHAMMM?!

I *SAID*, DRILL ANOTHER FRICKIN' HOLE IN ME!

.....

IT WAS *YOUR* IDEA IN THE FIRST PLACE! YOU CAN'T BAIL NOW!

RISKY?!

FOR STARTERS, I HIGHLY DOUBT IT'S EVEN CLOSED OVER.

LOOK...

!

BUT IT TAKES MORE THAN A FEW DAYS FOR A HOLE *THAT* BIG TO CLOSE OVER.

THE OSSEOUS TISSUE OF THE SKULL DOES REGENERATE OVER TIME...

THE HOLE I DRILLED IN YOU MEASURED THREE MILLIMETERS ACROSS.

STOP YAPPING, SLICE ME UP, AND CHECK!

SQUEEZE

ギュウウウ

FWIP

UGH, NAKOSHI-SAAAN...

YOU SELFISH PRICK.

I MEAN, I'D LOVE TO HELP AND ALL, BUT LIKE...NOT IF IT'S GONNA BE THIS BIG A HASSLE.

HONESTLY... NOW THAT WE'RE DONE WITH THE ME STUFF, I KINDA JUST DON'T GIVE A CRAP.

YOUR ISSUES AREN'T SOLVED YET, EITHER.

IT'S BEEN FUN, REALLY! BUT IT'S TIME I MOVED ON, SO--

YOU'RE GETTING THERE, BUT THERE'S STILL A BIT OF HOMUNCULUS LEFT IN YOU.

.....

AND IF YOU DON'T FIX THIS, YOU'LL NEVER FIND ANYONE ELSE WHO CAN!

BUT RIGHT NOW, I CAN'T SEE IT!

Medieval trephination from p. 26 in The Body by Alan E. Nourse. NY Time Incorporated, 1964

VOTE FEILDING

!

YOU SAID SHE SAW HOMUNCULI, RIGHT?

SHWK

YEAH...

THAT WOMAN YOU USED TO DATE.

SHWK

!

THIS HOMUNCULI DISAPPEARANCE THING...I DON'T THINK IT'S RELATED TO THE HOLE IN YOUR HEAD AT ALL.

LISTEN...

TREPANATION WAS A PLACEBO. A PSYCHOLOGICAL TRIGGER. IF YOU KNEW SOMEONE ELSE WITH THIS POWER...

IT MAY BE THAT YOU SAW THOSE CREATURES ONLY BECAUSE YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS WAS TRYING TO EMULATE HER.

?!

ESSENTIALLY, *HER* HALLUCINATIONS, AS YOU REMEMBER THEM, TRANSFERRED TO YOU.

.....

THE THINGS THAT WOMAN SAW WERE SIMPLY THAT-- HALLUCINATIONS.

BUT...

KLATTA

CHK...

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT...

!

NOT TO PRY, BUT WAS IT AT LEAST *SIMILAR* TO THE ONE YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF?

YOU NEVER TOLD ME WHAT HOMUNCULUS SHE SAW IN YOU.

KA-CHK

GA-CHK

I THINK SO...

IT'S MANIFESTING A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY, BUT I THINK THEY BOTH MEAN THE SAME THING.

FLINCH

GWEEE

.....

WOULDN'T IT BE EASIER TO JUST PATCH THINGS UP WITH THIS GIRL OF YOURS?

YOU SURE YOU WANNA GO THROUGH WITH THIS?

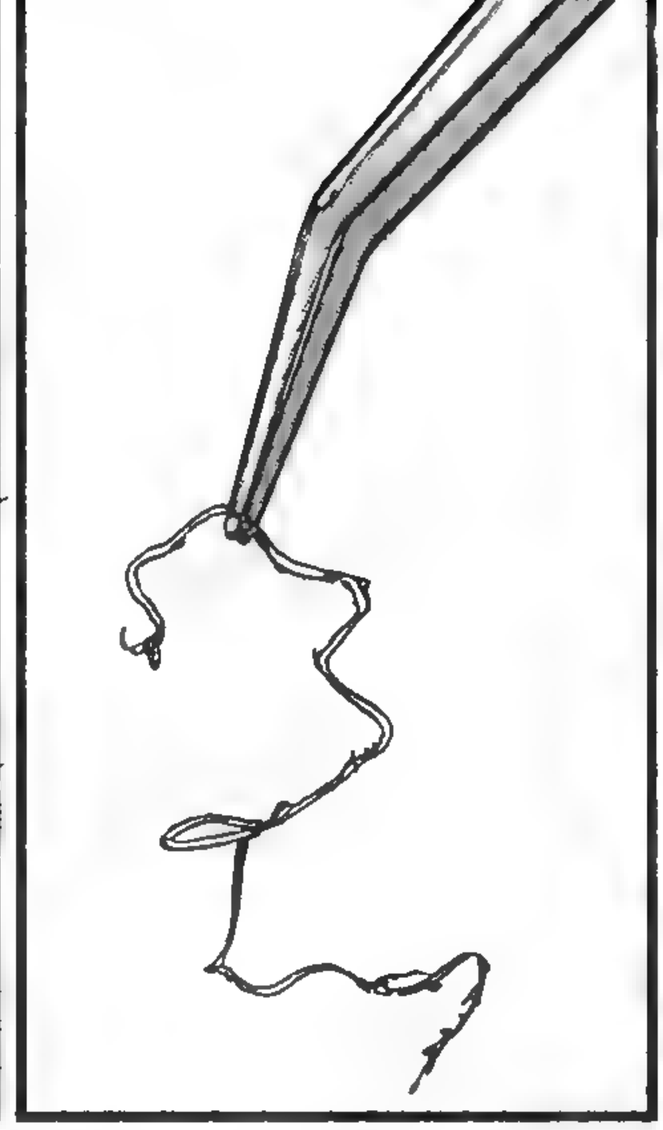
GWEEE

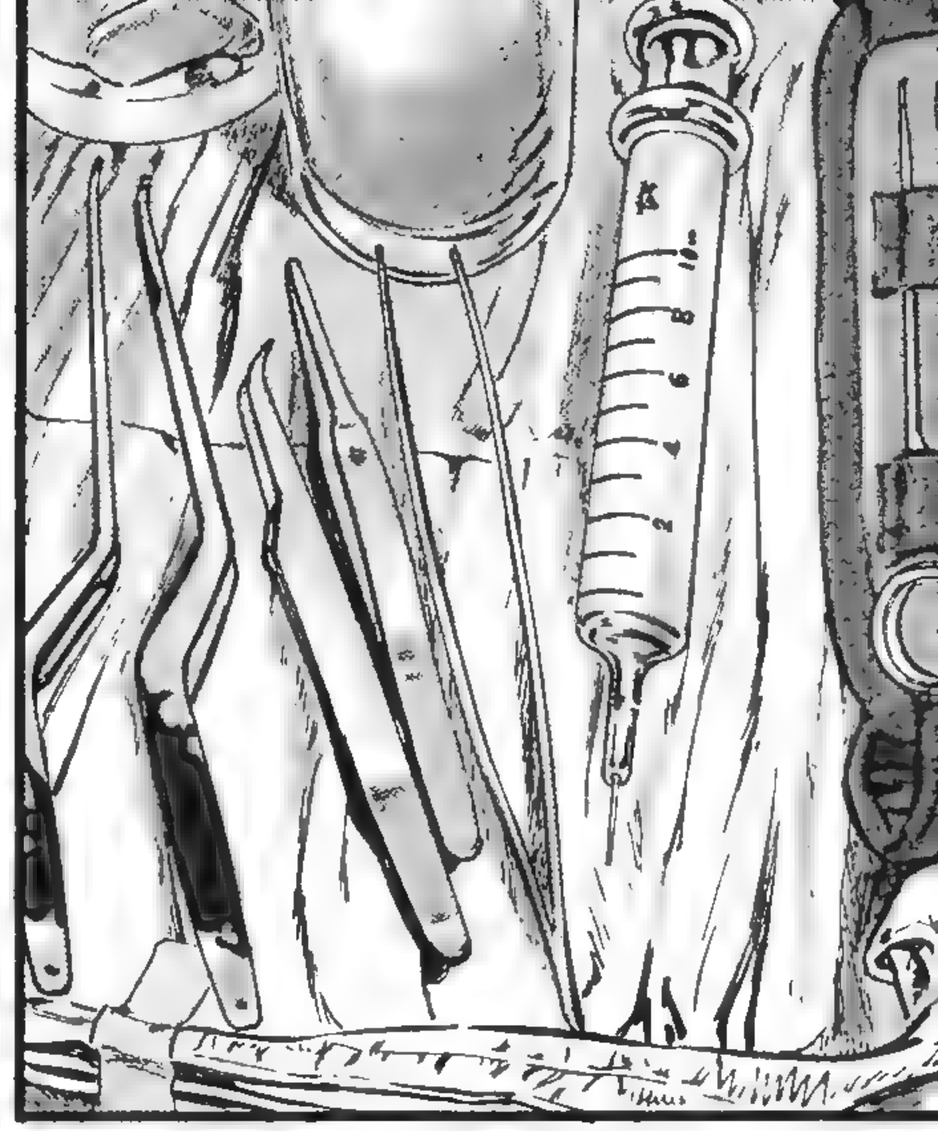
I'M SURE SHE AND YOUR HOMUNCULUS WOULD LOVE TO CATCH UP.

SHUT UP AND CUT ME OPEN ALREADY.

I WANT TO SEE *MYSELF.* WITH MY OWN TWO EYES!

HOLD
SHLP





OH DEAR.
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?!

IT HASN'T CLOSED OVER WITH NEW BONE...

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE IT *HAS* GOTTEN PLUGGED BY PUS AND SCABS.

THE HOLE IN YOUR SKULL...

SHP

EASY AS PIE! ♪

HM. SO ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS CLEAR OUT THE PLUG...

AND THE HOLE WILL BE *GOOD* AS NEW.

!

SHI

STARE

STARE

HERE.

FINE, FINE.

.....

YOU CAN USE THIS MIRROR TO WATCH THE PROCEDURE YOURSELF.

SINCE YOU *CLEARLY* DON'T TRUST ME...

SHRIK

SHRIK

SHRIK

SHRIK

SHRIK

SHRIK

SHRIK

STARE...

SHRIK

SHRIK

SHRIK

RIGHT.

THERE. SEE? NICE AND CLEAN NOW!

PRESS

SHF...

WHP

.....

NAKOSHI-SAN, CALM DOWN.

!

WHAT THE HELL, MAN?! I STILL CAN'T SEE CRAP!

LET'S STITCH YOU BACK UP.

.....

BACK WHEN WE FIRST OPENED THE HOLE, IT TOOK A WHILE TO SEE ANY EFFECTS, REMEMBER?

JUST BE A LITTLE PATIENT!

KLATTA
KLATTA

7mm

7mm

!

7mm

REPANATION

.....

YES?

HEY!

KLATTA KLATTA

Y...

YUP.

YOU SAID YOU ONLY MADE IT *THREE* MILLIMETERS, RIGHT?

WHEN YOU FIRST DRILLED THIS THING...

!

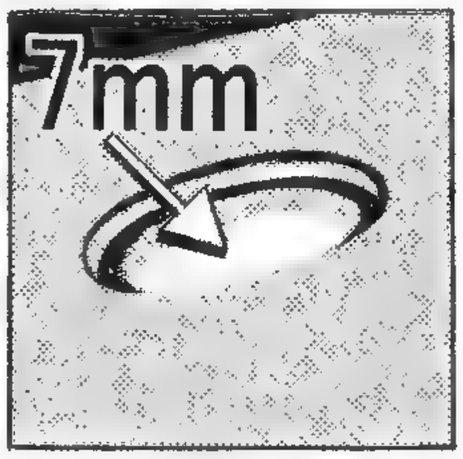
BUT THAT POSTER SAYS TREPANATION DOESN'T WORK UNLESS THE HOLE'S AT LEAST *SEVEN* MILLIMETERS ACROSS.

HAAH...

OKAY. SO?

pulsation, Robert Jo[illegible] entirely pull off an ancient medical procedure, in my workstation. Much like the many brilliant at others before us, we worked together to get what was needed to the next and do it well. I fell into a cursed series of dreams. I awoke the next morning feeling even better, and still in great spirits. I attributed the growing pleasure sensations to two things: it may take varying degrees of time from body to body for the Cerebro-spinal Fluid, ventricular tract, and that once all these dor blood, it may take a while for them to [illegible] of the brain when they are stimulated, at sitting, but it still may gradually be happe stimulated and gradually my brain is gettir motion.

I had read that it increased dream memor so be true. I have remembered my dreams since. We also read however, that if you suddenly stop, that you begin to remembe speaking so I could be clear on the treparia yesterd increase in mental energy and alc caffeine every morning like I used to. I just



OH, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE.

GIVE IT A REST ALREADY!

SO, MINE IS TOO SMALL! MAKE IT BIGGER!

IT SAYS RIGHT THERE THAT IT'S GOTTA BE SEVEN, OR...

BUT...

THE SIZE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

CHANGING IT WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON YOUR HALLUCINATIONS.

NAKOSHI-SAN...

BECAUSE THE SIXTH SENSE CAN TAKE ALL KINDS OF FORMS, RIGHT?

I KNOW THAT!

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THAT POSTER.

NOTICE IT SAYS ABSOLUTELY *NOTHING* ABOUT TREPANATION GRANTING ONE THE ABILITY TO SEE HOMUNCULI.

!

I WAS LYING ABOUT ALL THAT.

WRONG.

BUT, FRANKLY, THEY HAVE NO EVIDENCE.

THERE ARE A FEW SCATTERED OUTLIERS OVERSEAS WHO BELIEVE THAT TREPANATION HAS THE POWER TO "ACTIVATE THE THIRD EYE" OR SOME SUCH...

HOWEVER, IT IS *EXTREMELY* RISKY, AND SHOULD NEVER, *EVER* BE PERFORMED ON A HEALTHY PERSON.

THE ONLY *REAL* MODERN USE FOR TREPANATION IS AS PART OF A CRANIECTOMY--AN EMERGENCY MEASURE FOR A TRAUMATIC HEAD INJURY. HOLES ARE DRILLED INTO THE PATIENT'S SKULL TO RELIEVE PRESSURE AND DRAIN BLOOD.

ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT A "SIXTH SENSE," PSYCHIC POWERS, SEEING GHOSTS... I MADE IT ALL UP.

EVERY WORD OF IT.

.....!

PRODUCTS OF PLACEBO.

YOUR "HOMUNCULI" ARE JUST...

IT'S JUST LIKE I SAID.

?

YOU'RE SO FULL OF SHIT.

SEWER ...!

YOU'VE SEEN IT FIRSTHAND. YOU KNOW BETTER THAN *ANYONE*...

THAT THERE'S SOMETHING MORE TO THIS. SOMETHING YOUR TEXT-BOOKS CAN'T EXPLAIN.

.....

Hideo Yamamoto

Born in 1968, in Saitama Prefecture.

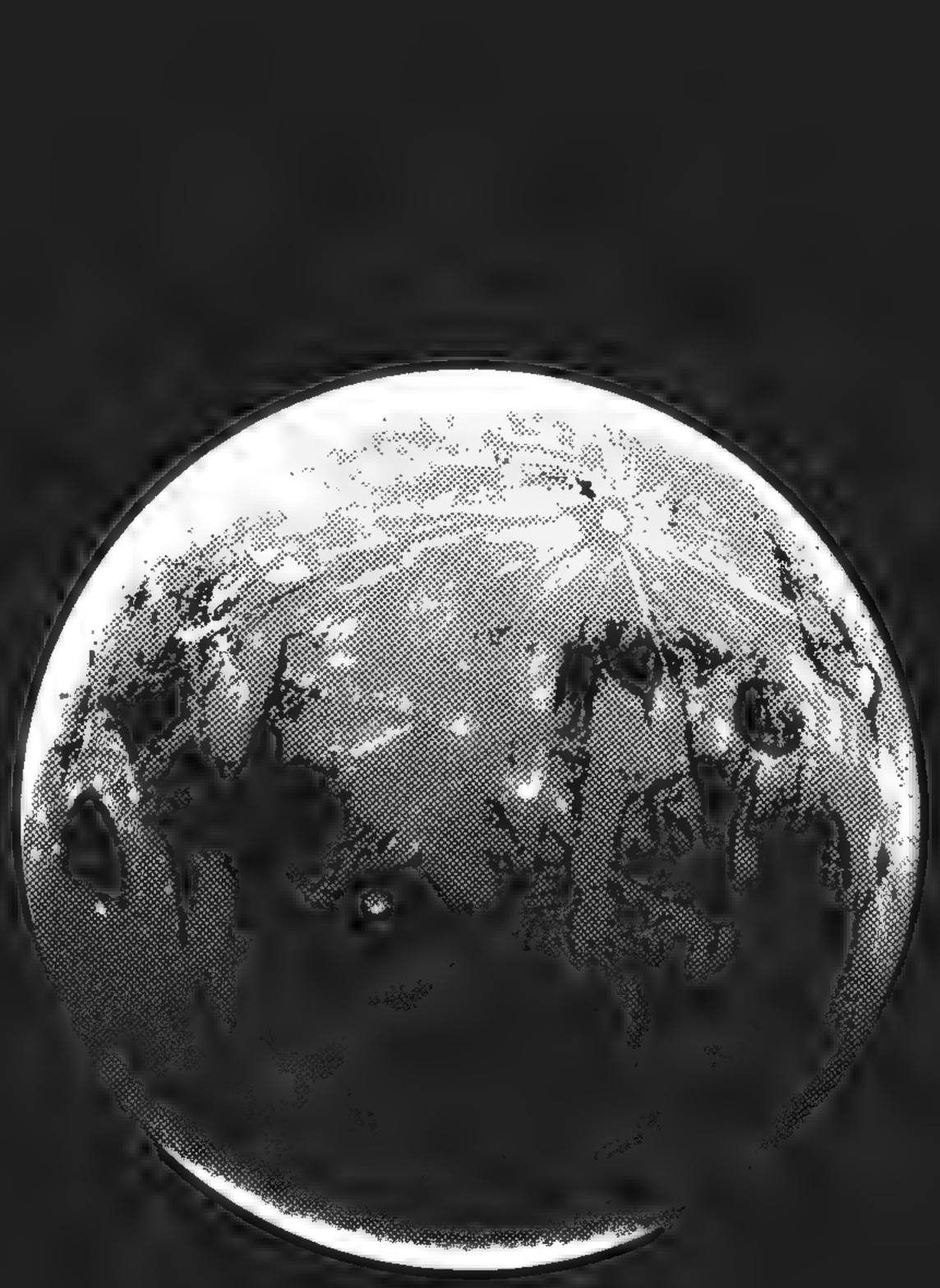
Hideo Yamamoto is his real name.

Assistant experience: Kenshi Hirokane-sensei, Ikuko Kujirai-sensei.

Works: *SHEEP, Okama Hakusho, Voyeur, Ichi the Killer, Homunculus, HIKARI-MAN.*

Homunculus

Volume 8



Urp! Oof ...

DAMN, CAR GUY! YER DRINKIN' LIKE *A CHAMP* TONIGHT.

ONCE YOUR BLOOD'S RACING... YOU CAN SEE **MONSTERS.**

AND THAT'S WHAT DOES IT.

MONSTERS ?!

HOL' UP!

BOOZE GETS YOUR HEART POUNDING, YOU KNOW?

GOOD FOR BLOOD FLOW.

HOO BOY, YOU'RE DRUNKER THAN A SKUNK, KID!

EH HEH HEH HEH HEH!

.....

PRESS

SHF!!!

DAMN IT.

FWP

IT'S THIS HOLE.

IT'S TOO DAMN *SMALL.*

I KNEW IT.

SWIG!

GRAB

……

IF I HAD A HOLE *THAT* BIG...

SO BIG...

DRIBBLE

DRIBBLE

DRIBBLE

I BET I'D SEE SOME *CRAAAZY* SHIT...

HIC!

HIC!

ALLEY-OOP!

WOBBLE

ふら

WOBBLE

ふら

FWSHH

!

SO COLD...

FWSHH

HM...?

STARE...

HIC!

USED TO MESS AROUND BACK IN THE DAY?

DIDN'T WE...

THAT GAL OVER THERE...

WHAT'D SHE DO FOR A LIVING AGAIN...?

URGH... I'VE BANGED SO MANY BROADS IN THIS HOTEL I CAN'T KEEP 'EM STRAIGHT.

ERGH ...!

ヒロ

ハハハハ

RUB RUB

.....

MY EYE...

、

HUH?

YUMEKO-CHAN?

WHATEVER. SHE'S JUST ANOTHER DUMB SLU...

RUB

RUB

.....?

.....?

STARE

IS THAT...

HIROMI FROM FERRIS U.?!

HUH?!

?!

ナンデヤネン

SCRITCH SCRITCH

HEH!

MUSTA HAD A FEW TOO MANY. EYES ARE PLAYING TRICKS.

.....?

WHAT THE...?

I SHOULD GET SOME SLEEP...

ズキ ズキ

THROB

AUGH! SHIT...

A...

I'M SO HUNGOVER ...

!

.....

THROB

THROB

Keep Out

THE HELL?

MORNING, KEN-SAN.

YEAH. REAL "WOOD-PECKER IN THE SKULL" SITUATION.

MORNIN', CAR GUY!

HUNGOVER, HUH? *KEH KEH KEH KEH!*

WHAT?

HE LEFT.

BUT NEVER MIND ME. WHERE'D KATSUZAWA-SAN'S TENT *GO?*

Keep Out

AND IN EXCHANGE, WE SHAPE UP AN' BECOME MODEL CITIZENS. THEY'RE MAKIN' IT SOUND ALL NICE AN' MORAL, BUT ALL THEY REALLY WANT IS US 'N' OUR UGLY TENTS OUTTA THEIR PARKS.

THE TOKYO BIG SHOTS ARE CRACKIN' DOWN ON GUYS LIKE US. THEY'VE *GOT* THIS NEW "REINTEGRATION INITIATIVE" PROGRAM. IDEA IS, THEY FIND US CHEAP APARTMENTS...

Keep Out

SO NO ONE CAN PUT A TENT UP THERE AGAIN.

SO WHEN ONE OF US LEAVES...

THEY RUSH IN AND PUT ONE OF THEIR LITTLE "PAWS OFF THE GRASS" SIGNS IN THE VACATED SPOT...

'BOUT HALF THE TENTS IN THIS PARK HAVE BEEN CLEARED OUT ALREADY.

Keep Out

Keep Out

Keep Out

WOW. I HAD NO IDEA.

YUP. BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, FOLKS LIKE US WON'T BE WELCOME IN THIS PARK ANYMORE.

URFF～

GULP!

GULP!

GULP!

THE WOMAN FROM LAST NIGHT...

FWSH

!

PLAP

FLUTTER

シ！

……？

HMMM…

WHO?

CHINATSU-CHAN?

.....

THAT FACE. IS THAT...

GYNRRL!!!

WH-WH-WHOA!

WHA...?

THESE ARE...

I SEE ...

NOW I GET IT.

THE FACES OF ALL THE WOMEN I'VE SLEPT WITH.

THAT WOMAN...

CAN'T BLAME IT ON BOOZE THIS TIME. I'M STONE COLD SOBER.

.....

SHE'S... A HOMUN-CULUS ?!

WHP

CLENCH

SO THAT MEANS...

.....?

WHP

WHP

THE HELL IS GOING ON?

I STILL CAN'T SEE THEM...

HER HOMUNCULUS NOW?

CAN I ONLY SEE...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?! CAN'T YOU, LIKE... CALL FIRST?!

N- NAKOSHI-SAN?!

GA-CHAK

ACK!

SHUT UP AND LEMME IN!

UH, IT'S NOT A GOOD TIME. I'M, UH--

WAIT, UM, JUST A--

TMP

TMP

TMP

WAHH~~~~...!

YOU CAN'T JUST BARGE IN HERE LIKE YOU OWN THE PLACE!

I'VE GOT MY OWN LIFE, YOU KNOW!

HUH?

I STILL CAN'T SEE 'EM.

!

THE HOMUNCULI. I CAN'T SEE THEM THAT WELL...

!

BUT NOT AS CLEARLY?

ARE YOU SEEING THINGS AGAIN...

WHAT DOES *THAT* MEAN?

"THAT WELL"?

.....

YOU POSITIVE IT'S NOT BECAUSE OF THE HOLE?

WHAT ?!

I'M SAYING, ARE YOU *SURE* IT'S NOT BECAUSE IT'S TOO SMALL?

I ALREADY TOLD YOU, THE SIZE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!

YEAH, BUT...

NAKOSHI-SAN, GIVE ME A BREAK!

UGH. THAT AGAIN?!

THE SIZE OF THE HOLE HAS *ZERO* BEARING ON HOW THESE DELUSIONS MANIFEST!

THESE "HOMUNCULI" ARE ***DELUSIONS!*** HALLUCINATIONS COOKED UP BY YOUR OWN MIND THANKS TO A PLACEBO EFFECT!

I'VE TOLD YOU LIKE, A HUNDRED TIMES!

FINE. MAYBE IT *IS* ALL IN MY HEAD.

!

BUT I KNOW MY HEAD BETTER THAN YOU DO.

SO IF I SAY THIS PLACEBO WILL WORK, THEN IT'LL WORK.

IF YOU DRILL A BIGGER HOLE...

I'LL SEE HOMUNCULI AGAIN.

.....

DOESN'T THAT MEAN YOU'RE SEEING THEM, ALBEIT POORLY?

IF YOU CAN'T SEE THEM *WELL...*

Medieval trephination from p. 26 in The Body, by Alan E. Nourse, NY: Time Incorporated, 1964.

ONLY ONE.

.....

!

I'M SEEING *ONE SINGLE WOMAN'S* HOMUNCULUS.

IT'S THE ONLY ONE LEFT.

YEAH. JUST HERS.

THAT'S IT?

WHAT SORT OF SHAPE DOES SHE TAKE?

Neck isn't ← on back part of head

One of those loud, heavily made-up types.

Her hips spin around, but no other part does.

Woman cut into six round slices.

His eyes are

OF EVERY WOMAN I'VE SLEPT WITH.

IT'S LIKE A WHIRLING KALEIDOSCOPE...

GOOD-NESS.

BUT HER FACE CHANGES CONSTANTLY.

MOSTLY NORMAL.

!

SO...

YEAH.

SHE TAKES THE FORM OF WOMEN YOU'VE HAD RELATIONS WITH?

WHAT ABOUT THAT WOMAN WHO COULD SEE HOMUNCULI? HAS THIS FACE-THIEF EVER WORN *HER* FACE?

?!

NO.

WELL? HAS SHE?

I HAVE.

AND HAVE YOU EVER MET THIS WOMAN WITH THE HOMUNCULUS BEFORE?

WHY HER THEN?

HMMM...

BUT SHE WASN'T SPECIAL. JUST ONE OF A HUNDRED GOLD DIGGERS I SCREWED AROUND WITH.

TO BE FRANK, SHE LEFT EVEN LESS OF AN IMPRESSION ON ME THAN MOST.

.....

I ALSO REALLY DON'T CARE, SOOO...

THOUGH, LIKE...

STARE

TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER, MAN!

UGH, WOULD YOU LET THAT GO ALREADY?!

IF YOU'D JUST MAKE IT BIGGER, I'D SEE MORE. I CAN FEEL IT.

!

WHAT'S THIS...?

Article in The Observer

HOLE IN THE HEAD - Caludin' blackwood holds in a degree of explanation

England - Sunday 27th July 1997

In the last General Election Amanda Fielding ran as an Independent candidate for Chelsea and got 139 votes. When she ran for Parliament five years ago, she only polled 40. The platform on which

Amanda's Project

By Diana Kakuriba ("Okechaya Gazette")

Bumba - Feb 16th, 2008

Amanda Fielding lives in a historical castle, but far from Oxford. Proof that she is a descendant of the Blackthorpe can be seen in the family tree and ancestral portraits that line the castle walls.

Amanda is a talented artist whose works are often displayed in London's prestigious galleries. A charming lady, devoted to her husband and sons, she is a gifted socialite, who is easily able to fascinate those around her with

IS THIS CHICK DOING IT TO HERSELF?

HUH?

YOU CAN DO IT YOUR-SELF...

THAT'S A CASE STUDY IN SELF-TREPANATION.

UM... YEAH.

YOU AREN'T REALLY...?! IT'S FAR TOO RISKY!

NO... NOOO, NO, NO, NO!

WAIT.

I'M NOT KIDDING, NAKOSHI-SAN!

PEOPLE HAVE *LITERALLY DIED* TRYING TO TREPAN THEMSELVES!

DOING IT BY YOURSELF IS DOWNRIGHT SUICIDAL!

IT'S HARD ENOUGH FOR A *SECOND PARTY* TO DRILL THROUGH THE BONE WITHOUT PIERCING THE CEREBRAL MEMBRANE.

GLANCE..

.....

.....

I'M NOT SERIOUSLY CONSIDER-ING IT, MORON.

.....

BESIDES, I DON'T NEED TO. *YOU'RE* GONNA DO IT FOR ME. RIGHT?

SMIRK...

I'VE GOTTA PICK UP MY DRY CLEANING.

!

OH, CRAP!

BE RIGHT BACK!

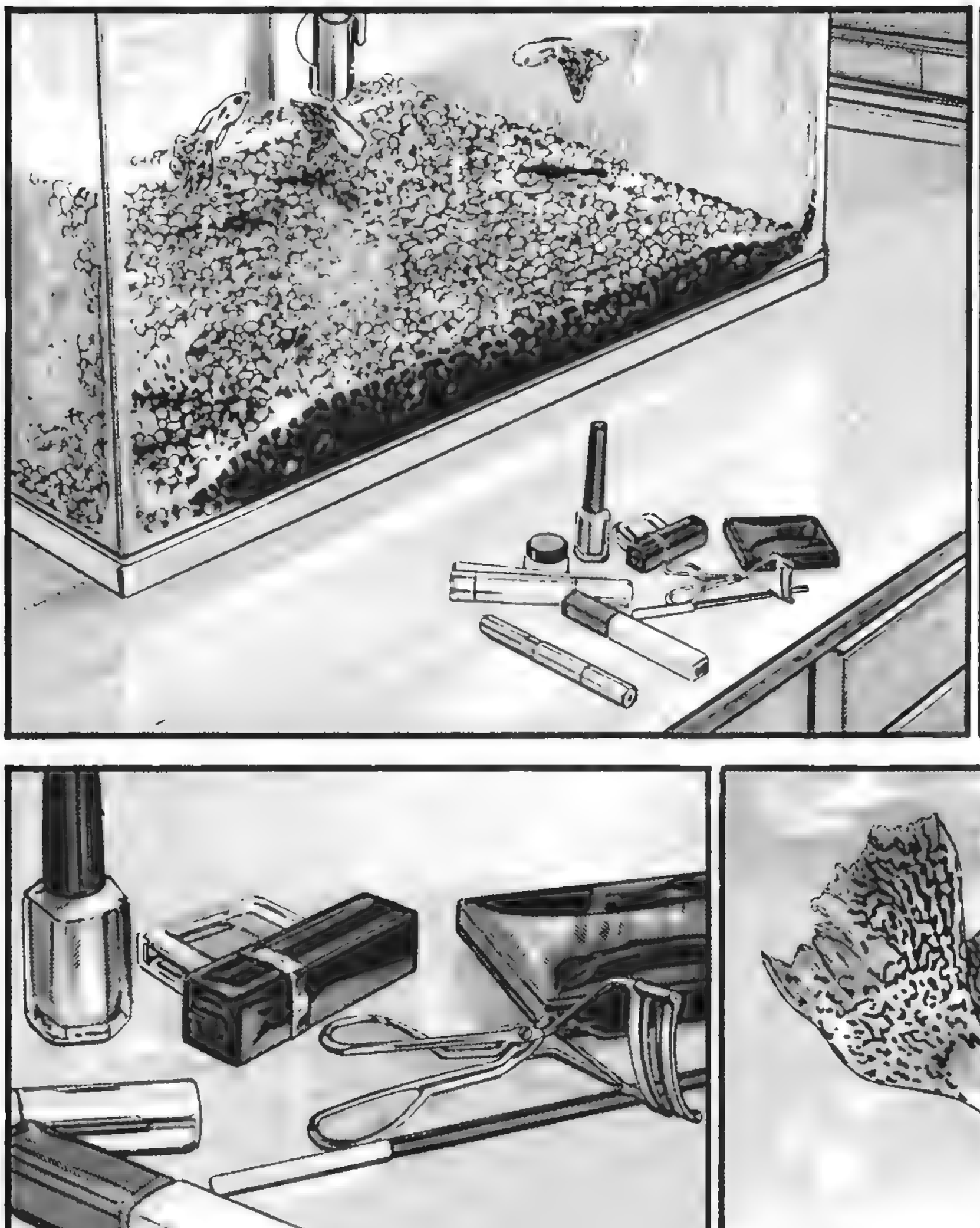
GA-CHAK

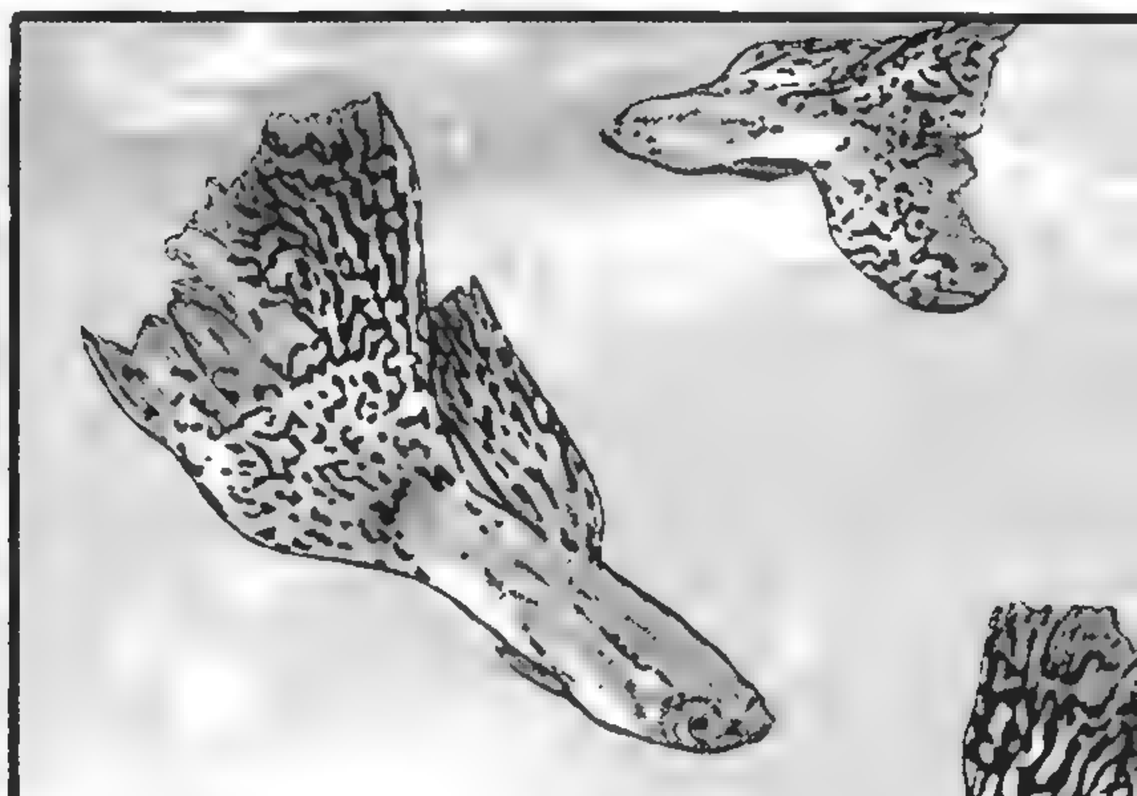
DAMMIT. RAN OFF ON ME.

.....

BA-TNK

!





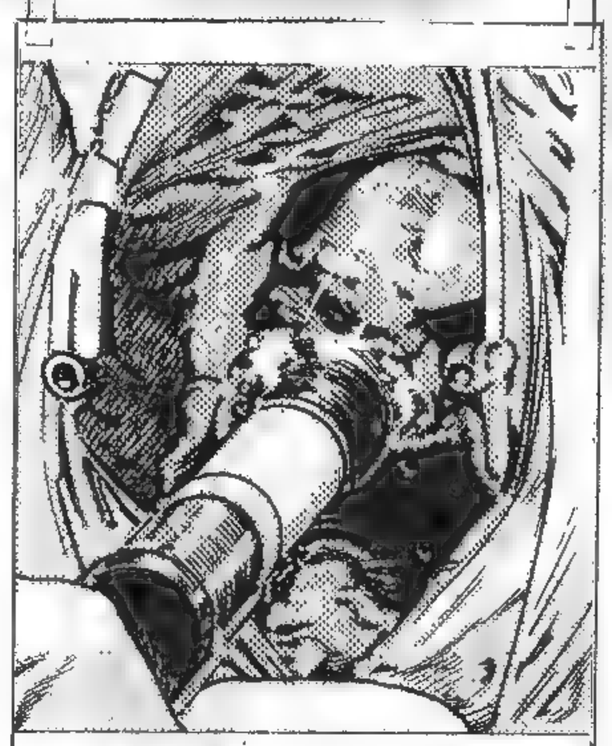
SURGERY

SHF...

TED NIMATOR

7mm

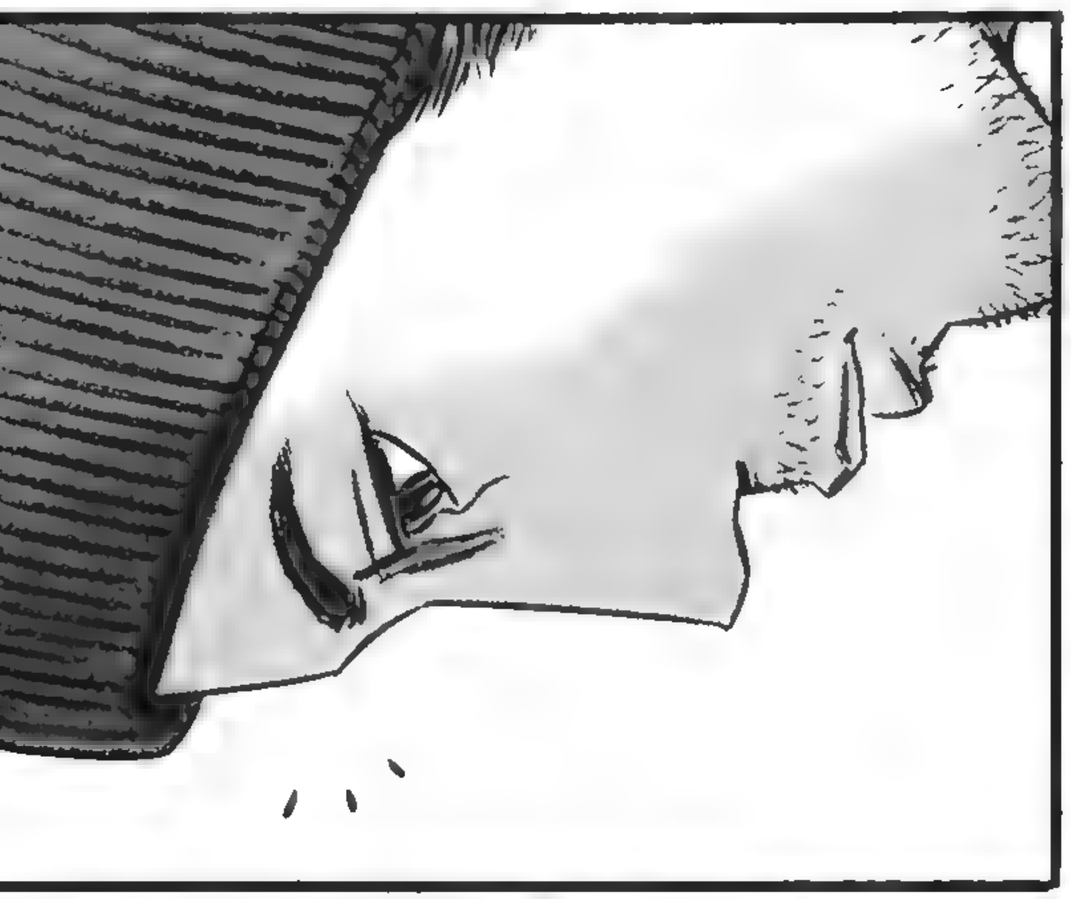
Medieval trephination from p. 26 in The Body, by Alan E. Nourse, NY: Time Incorporated, 1964.



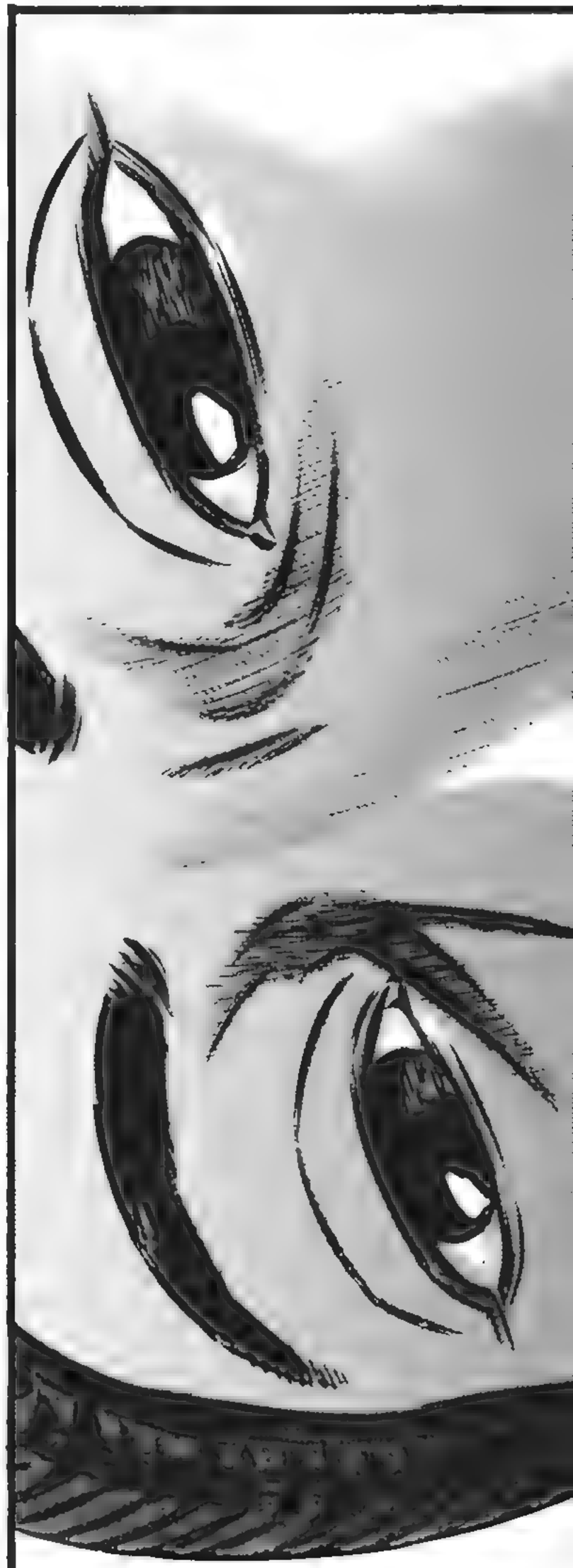
TREPANATION

VOTE FEILDING

Medieval trephination from p. 26 in The Body, by Alan E. Nourse, NY: Time Incorporated, 1964.



TREPANATION (MATERIALS)
ALL PONES!!



I'M BAAACK!

!

LEFT JUST LIKE HE CAME...WITH NO WARNING AND NO SHITS GIVEN.

.....

HUH...?

SURGERY

NOT LIKE HE WAS LISTENING TO ME ANYWAY.

WELL, WHATEVER.

TREPANATION (MATERIALS)

TREPANATION

TREPANATION (MATERIALS)

ALL DONE?!

ハイ

HMM ...

STILL KINDA EMBAR-RASSING.

.....

WHA...?! SERIOUSLY?! THIS THING *STILL* HAS SPLIT ENDS?!

!

GA-CHAK

SURGERY

SCISSORS, SCISSORS ...

NOPE. SCREW THIS.

WHAT THE...?

¡¿

SCISSORS, SCISSORS...

HSMT

ALL THE REPORTS ON TREPANATION HAVE BEEN RIPPED OFF THE WALL...

WHP!

AH!

IT'S GONE...

.....

VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM

NAKOSHI-SAN...

VROOOOOOM

SKRRR!

HE'S NOT HERE...

WHP

NAKO-
SHI-
SAA-
AAN!

.....

WHUMP

SNAP

NAKOSHI-SAN...

NAKOSHI-SAN!!

HAAH!
HAAH!
HAAH!
HAAH!
NAKOSHI ...
HAAH!
SAN...
U-UM.
HEY...?

FOR THE LOVE OF...

NAKOSHI-SAN...

WHAT'S WRONG?

WH...

IZZIS THAT "TRANS-GANDER" THING I HEARD 'BOUT?

MURMUR

LOOKS LIKE IT.

MURMUR

DAMN GOOD 'UN, TOO. SHE'S *CUTE*. WITH A WIG, I PROLLY COULDN'T TELL.

DRAG QUEEN, HUH?

I KNOW, I'M SORRY.

HOW *DARE* YOU TAKE ALL MY MATERIALS ON TREPANATION WITHOUT ASKING!

GLARE ...

SO CAN I BORROW THEM, PLEASE? JUST FOR A BIT?

I JUST WANTED TO STUDY THEM. GET MY THOUGHTS IN ORDER, YOU KNOW?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

AND THAT'S THE **ONLY** REASON YOU WANT THEM?

?

YOU'RE NOT PLANNING ON DOING IT BY **YOURSELF**, ARE YOU?

OHH!

WHAT, *TREPANA-TION?!*

HUH...?

.....

OF COURSE NOT! WHY WOULD I?!

I MAY HAVE A HOLE IN MY SKULL, BUT IT'S NOT LIKE MY BRAIN'S FALLEN OUT!

.....

I'M OUT OF HERE.

NO THANKS.

I SWEAR. WANNA DRINK TO IT BEFORE YOU GO?

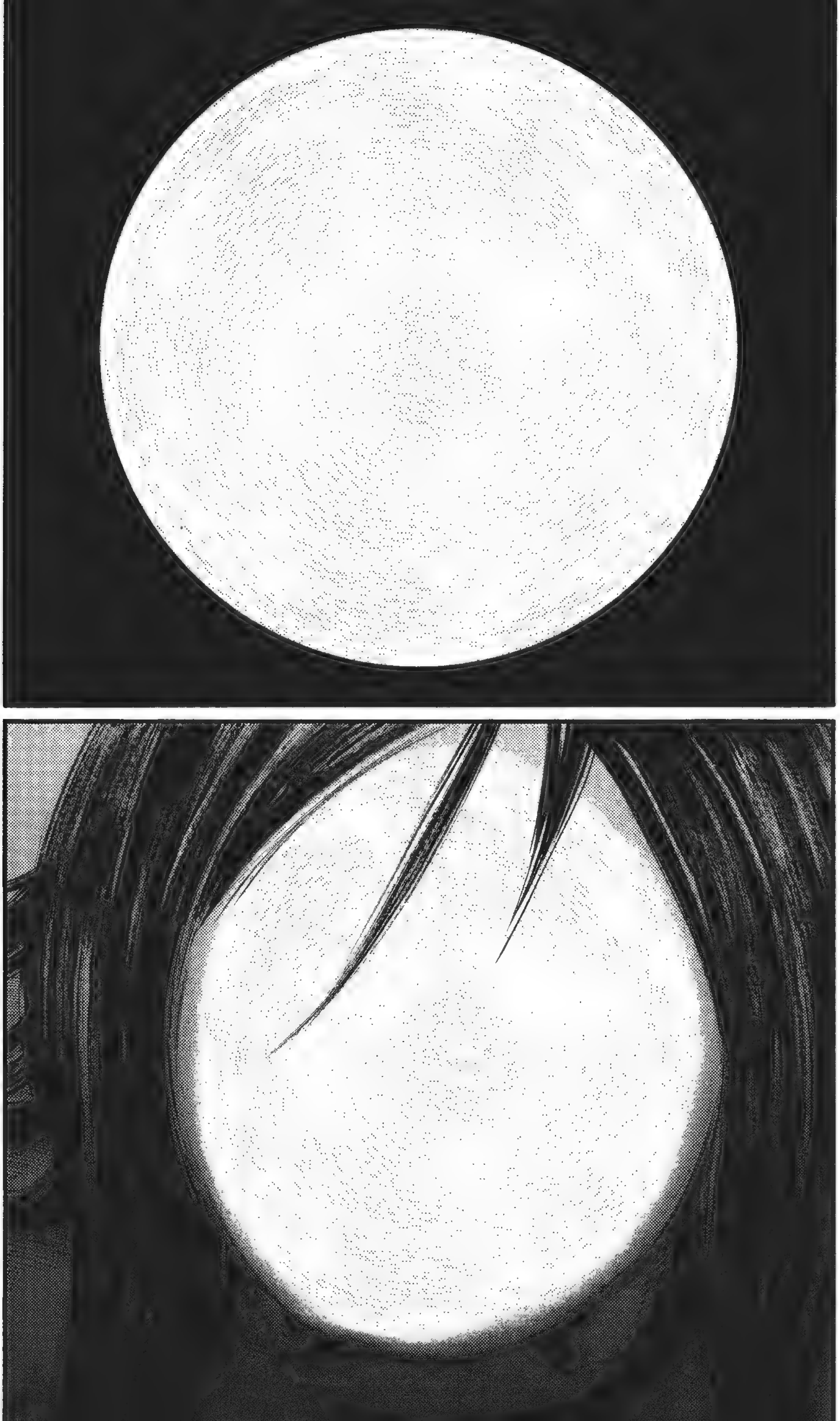
BUT YOU'D BETTER GIVE IT ALL BACK WHEN YOU'RE DONE.

YOU GOT IT.

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK



WHO...?

ARE YOU... NANAKO...?

WHO ARE YOU?

ARE YOU...?

MUTTER MUTTER

NANAKO ...?

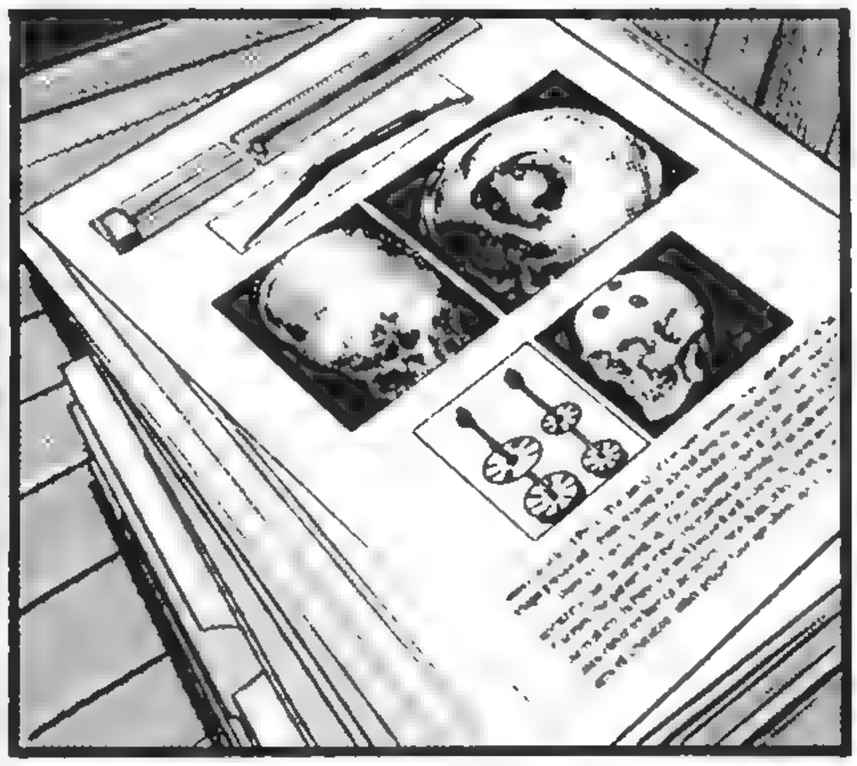
WHO...?

RMB RMB RMB RMB RMB

SHAAA

DETONATION (MATERIALS)

CHOMP



ALL
ESY!
DETONATION (MATERIALS)

HUNH. MAKING THE SAME HOLE BIGGER IS *THAT* RISKY?

!

HOMF

HOMF

BORE HOLE

YOU SHOULD MAKE *MORE* HOLES.

SO IF YOU WANNA GO THE SAFE ROUTE...

HMMM ...

I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT THE NUMBER OF HOLES...

SHAAA

!!

RUMMAGE

(MATERIALS)

SHF

RSTL!

TREPANATION (MATERIALS)

ALL DONE?!

Name plate: Tanaka-san

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

SQUEAK

BA-TNK

GNG

OCCUPIED

GA-CHNK

ALL DONE?!

THWMP

(WATERIALS)

FSHH

SQK

SQK

SQK

SKRR-PWCK

FSHH

FSHH

FSHH

♪ ♫ ♪ ♫ ♪

HMMM
HMMM
HMMM

by JoaMdla

PRESS

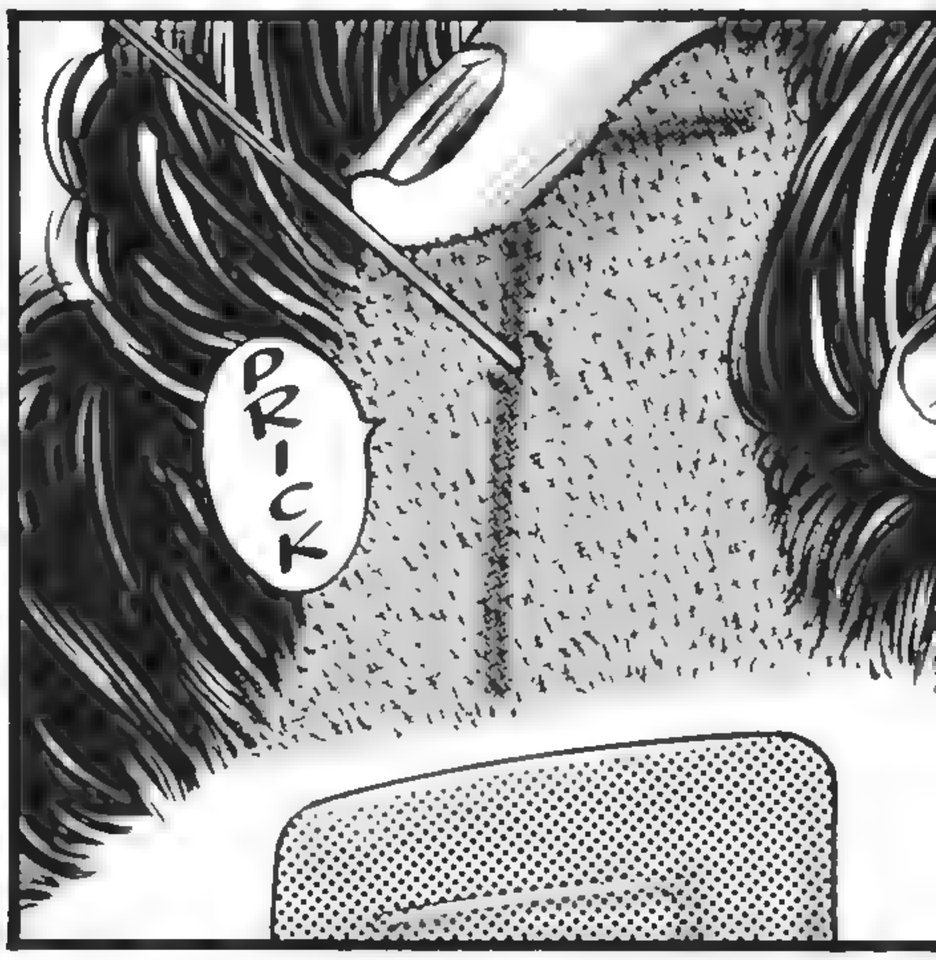
VRRR

.....

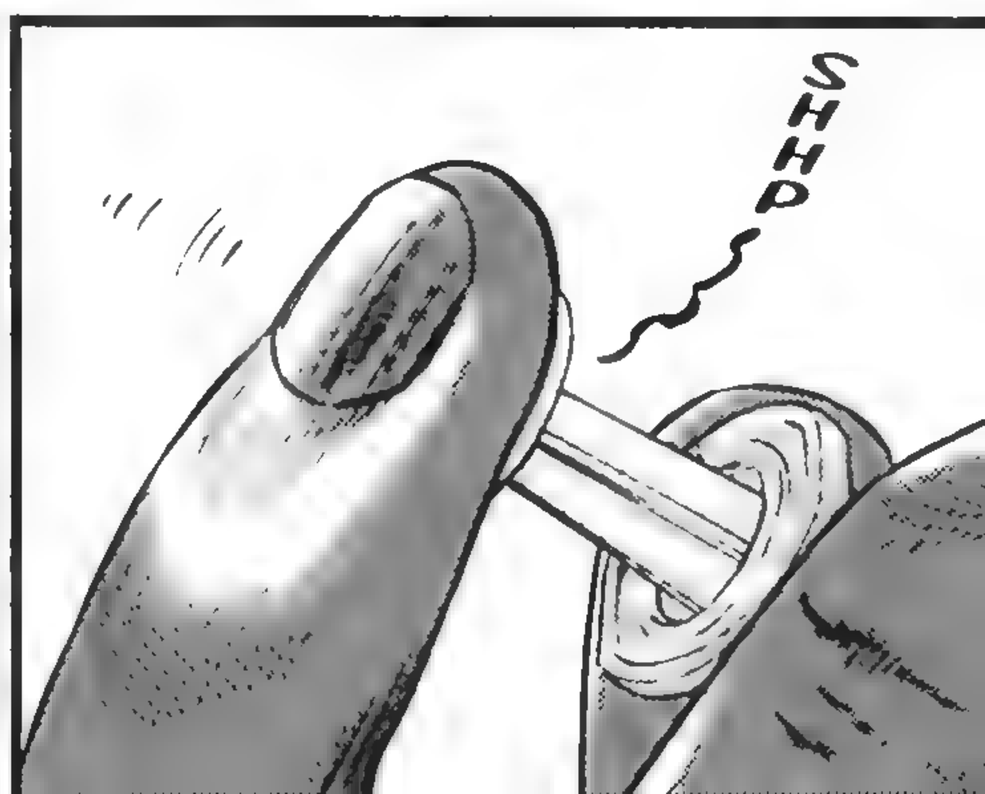
OUCH.

GLAD I GRABBED THIS STUFF TOO.

.....


PRICK

KLAKA


SHIP

THE ANESTHETIC'S KICKING IN.

ALL RIGHT.

TAD

TAD

TAD

SHF...

SHK

STAB

TAD

SHK

SKRU

PRESS

PRESS

SHF

(PENUMATION (MALE PENIS)

IT'S FRICKIN' HUGE.

THIS IS THE SEVEN MILLIMETER, HUH?

WEEE

SUPPOSEDLY, THIS THING'S MADE SO IT'LL AUTOMATICALLY STOP BEFORE IT HITS THE CEREBRAL MEMBRANE.

.....

THAT'S THE END FOR ME. UNDER-STAND?

'CAUSE IF YOU GO ANY FARTHER... IF YOU BREAK THROUGH THAT MEMBRANE ...

HEAR THAT? YOU'RE ONLY DRILLING THROUGH THE BONE, BUDDY.

DON'T LET ME DOWN, PAL.

DNK

GULP

GULP

GULP

WHP

THWIP

HOOHMMM

by Joe Media

OCT 2 98

TREPANATION

!

THE HELL... AM I DOING?

HA HA...

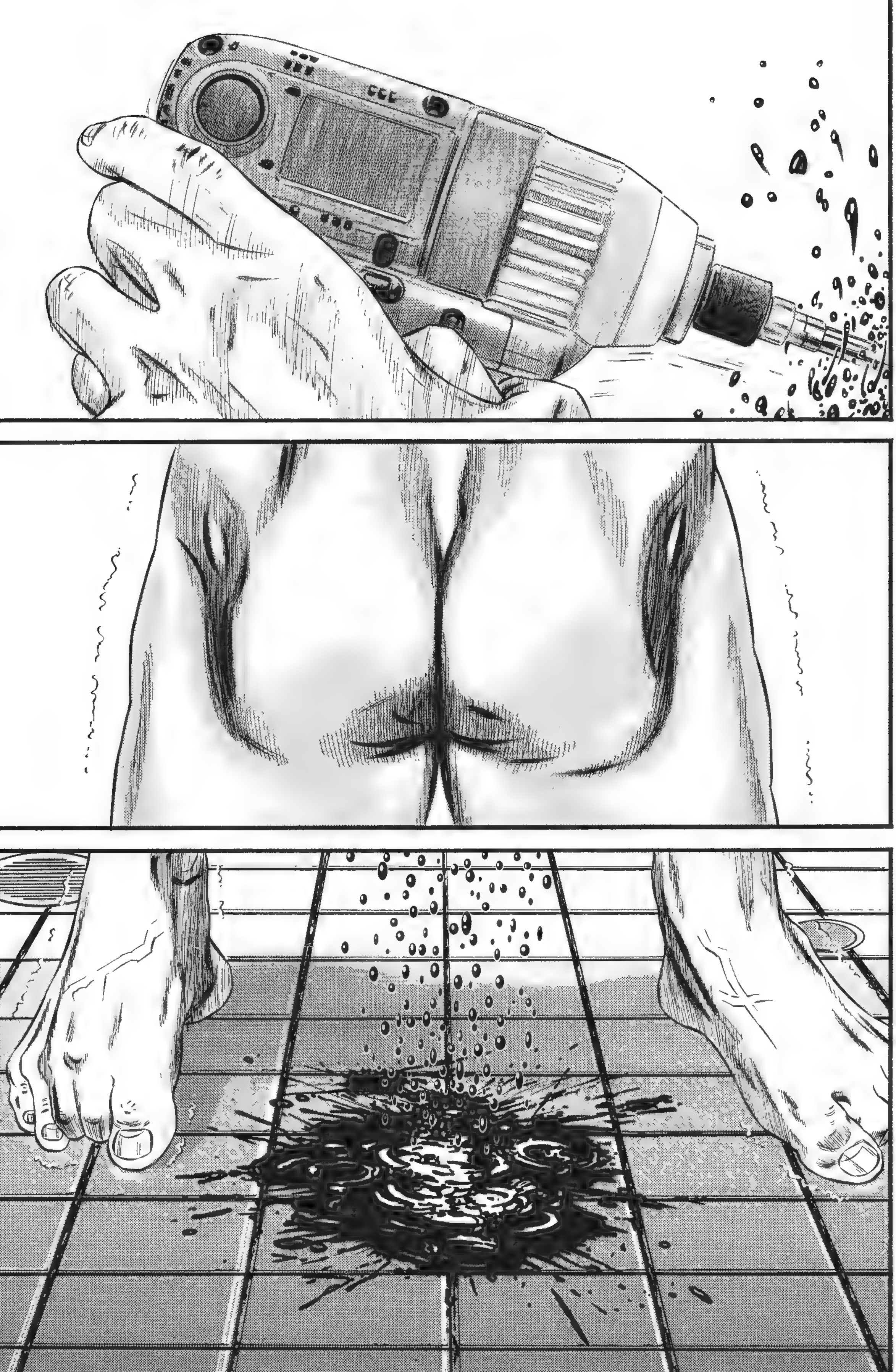
.....

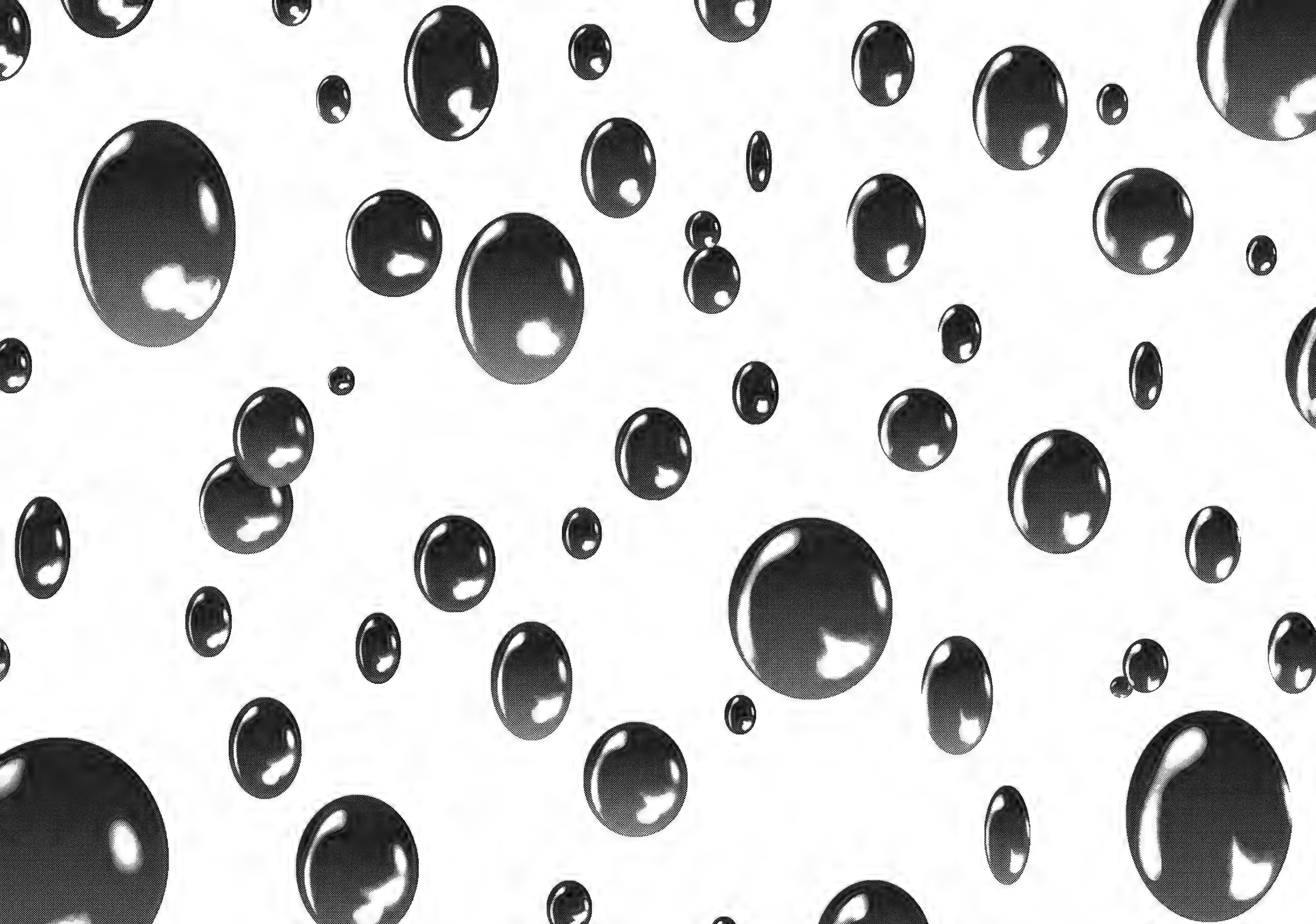
WELL...IF I SCREW UP AND DIE NAKED IN A PUBLIC BATHROOM... AT LEAST THE GRIM REAPER'LL GET A GOOD LAUGH.

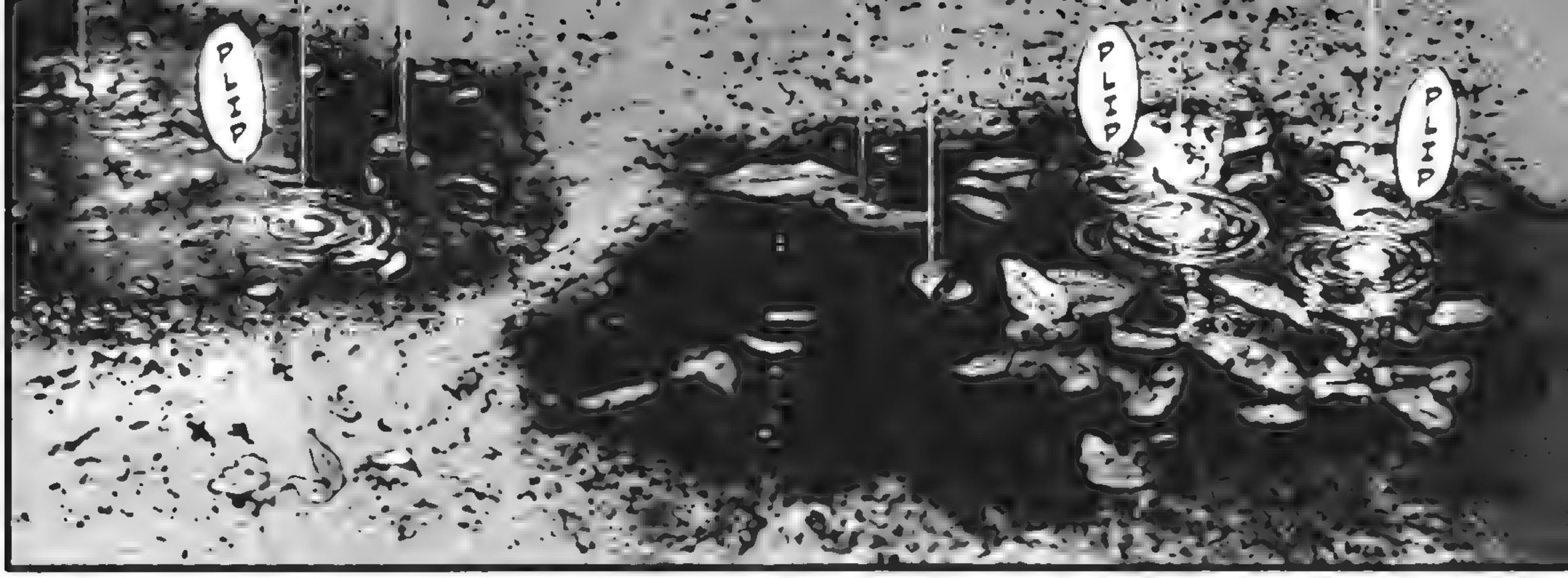
CHK

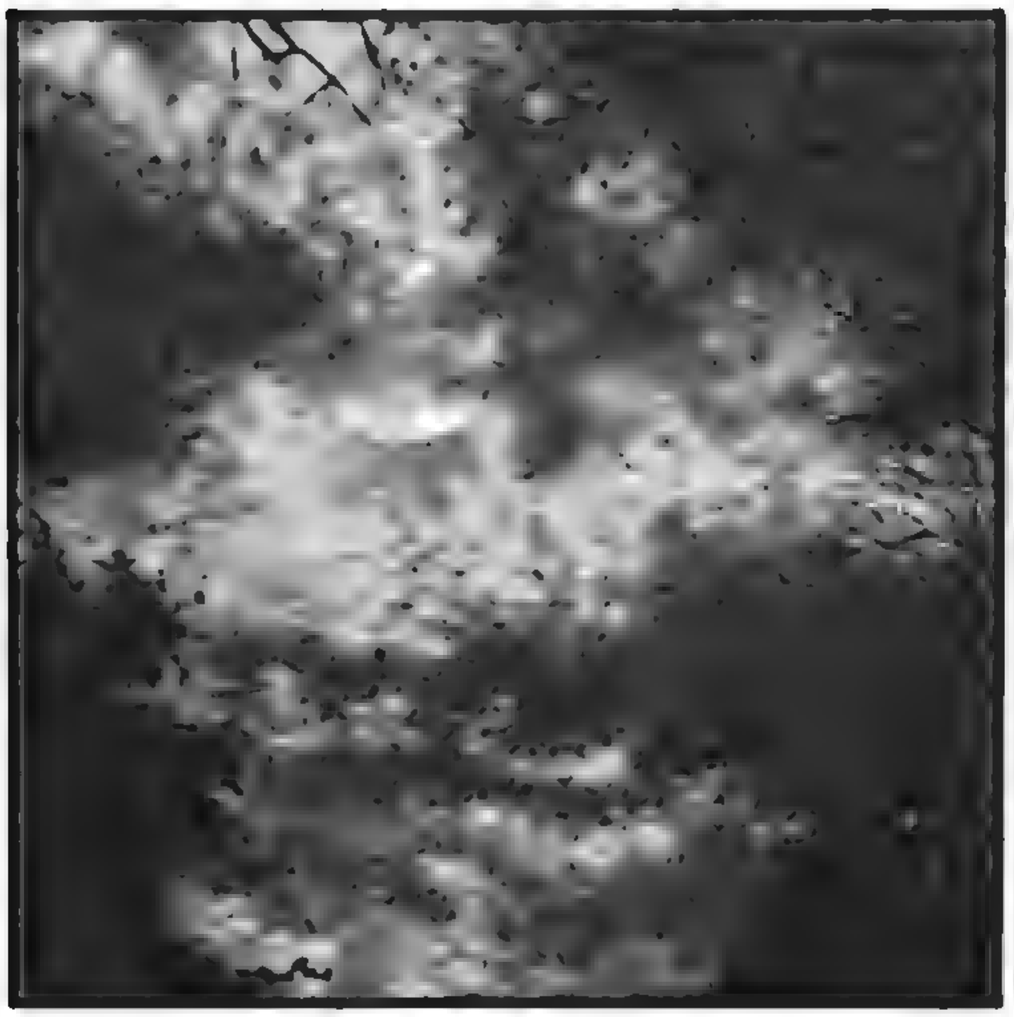
SHAA

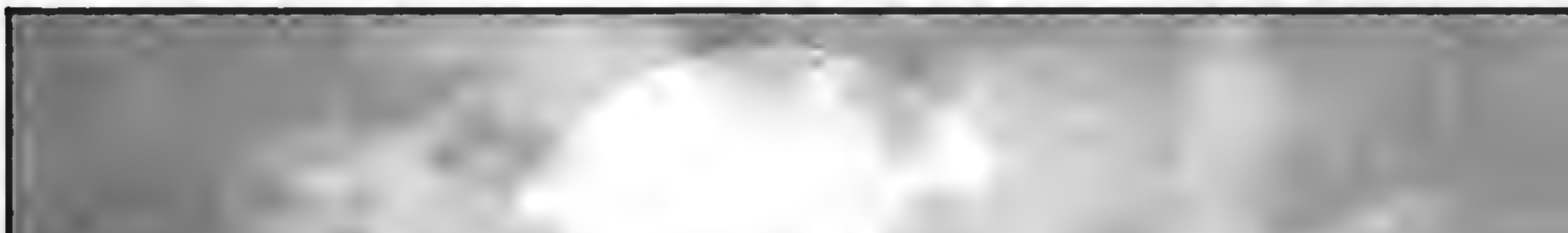
WEEE!

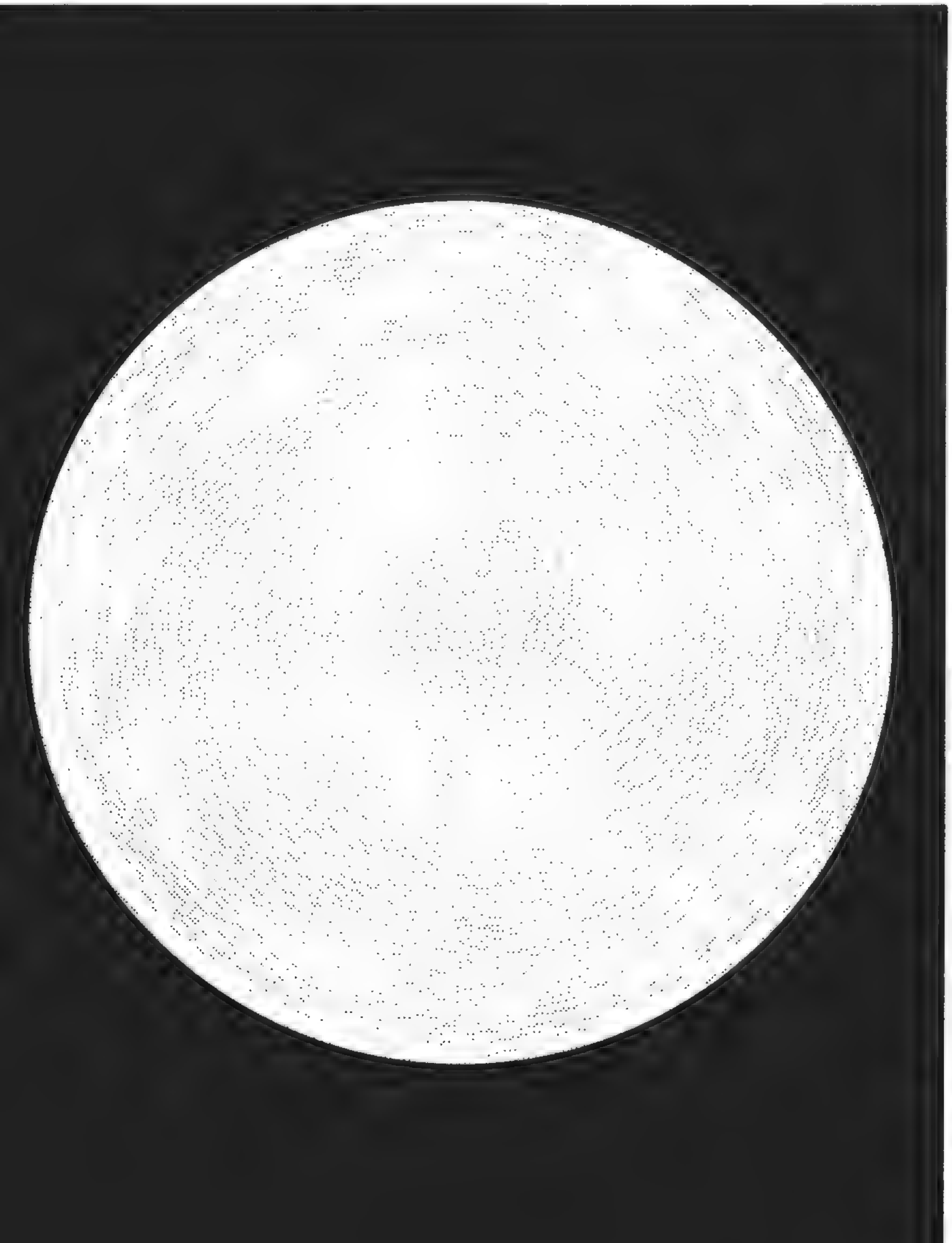





PLIP
PLIP
PLIP







ドンドン
ドンドン

HA

?!

?mm

IT STOPPED...

IS IT... OPEN?

NLP...

SHF...

IT IS OPEN... I CAN FEEL IT.

NUCH boo

POKE

OH...

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

WH...

WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

?

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

MY...

BRAIN...

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

.....

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

I'M GETTING A PULSATING!

IT'S LIKE A BEATING HEART...
THROBBING WITH LIFE!

!

BA-
DMP

!

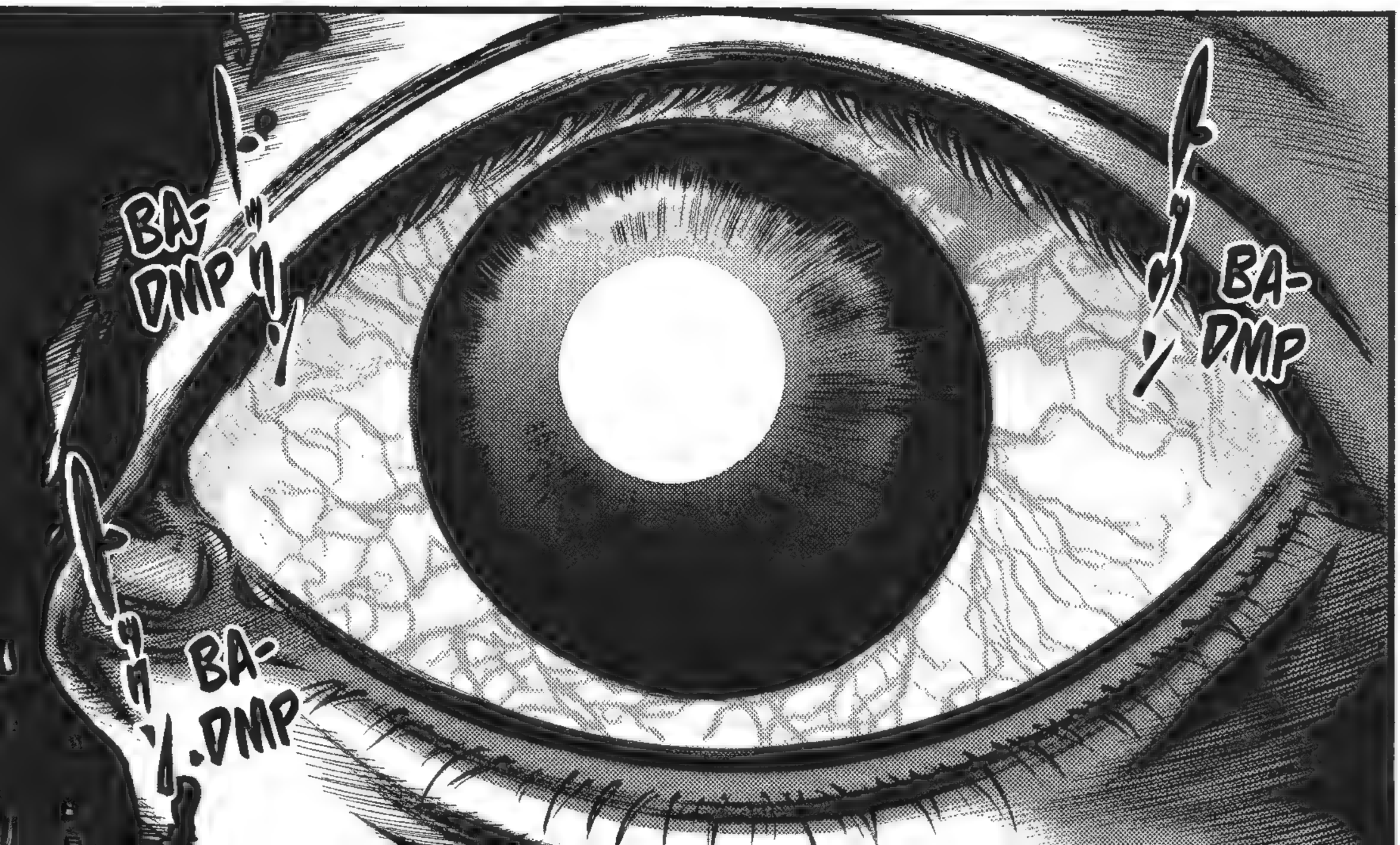
BA-
DMP

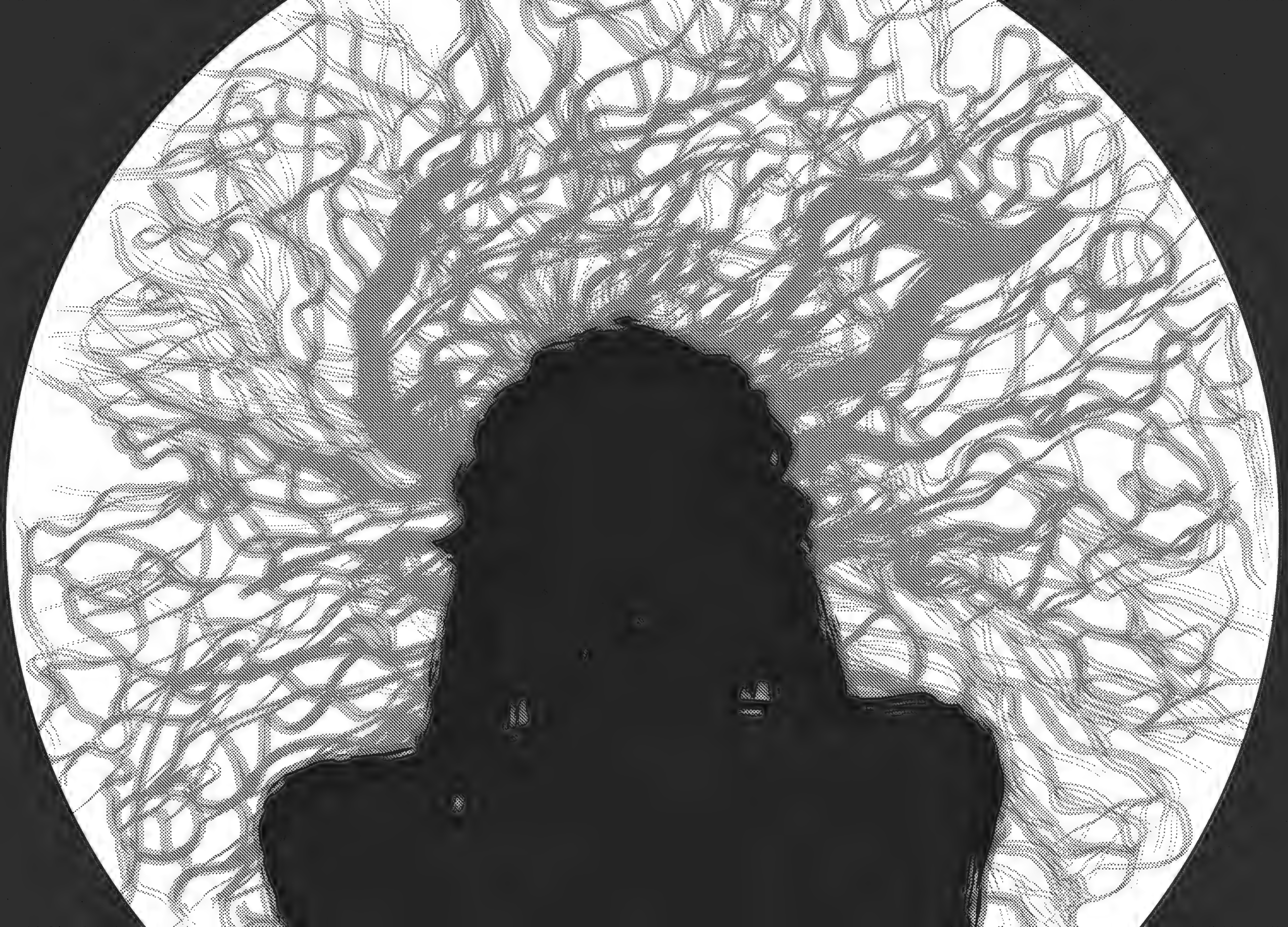
!

BA-
DMP

!

BA-
DMP


BA-DMP
BA-DMP
BA-DMP



OCT 2 98

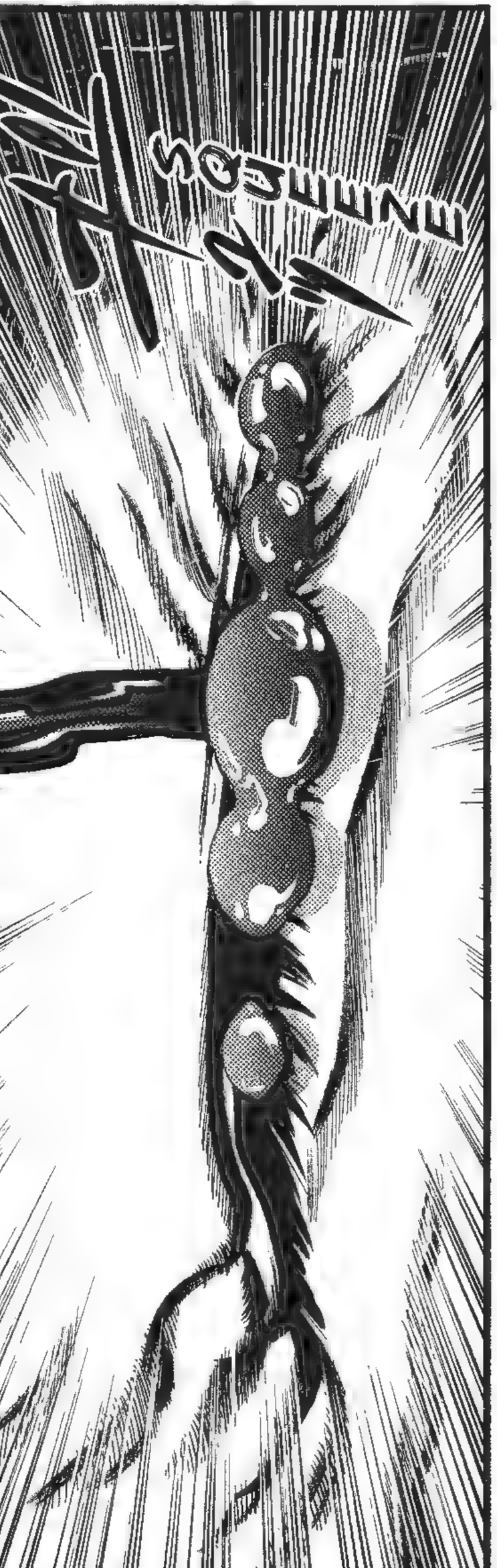
!

OOZE

SCHLRR

SHLUP

NLRGH


MNMSOSH
HSOSWNW

!

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

!

SQUELCH

THE TRUE "ME"...

WAVER

I FEEL LIKE I MIGHT SEE IT TONIGHT, IF ONLY FAINTLY...

WOBBLE

WOBBLE

I FEEL SO WEAK... EVERYTHING'S HAZY...

MAKES SENSE, AFTER ALL THAT BLOOD LOSS...

THUMP

CREAK

WHEW...

WINK

YUP. HER FACE'S DIFFERENT AGAIN.

NYRL

WH...

!

WHOA ...

NYRRR

THERE SHE GOES AGAIN...

CAN'T YOU KEEP THE SAME FACE FOR FIVE DAMN MINUTES?

.....

WHUMP

KLAK

TAK

TAK

TAK

TAK

TAK

TAK

TAK

TAK

ERGH...
UGH...

SHFU

!

UH...

YEAH...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

NOPE. I'M GOOD.

SHOULD I CALL AN AMBULANCE?

WE USED TO KNOW EACH OTHER.

HUH?

DO YOU REMEMBER ME?

Y...

YEAH...

SMILE

OF COURSE. NAKOSHI-SAN, RIGHT?

.....

IT'S BEEN A REALLY LONG TIME!

OH...

HUH?

I'M SORRY...

BUT... WHAT'S YOUR NAME AGAIN?

.....?

I DON'T REMEMBER ANYONE WITH THAT NAME...

IT'S OKAY. I'M MAKIMURA YUKI.

I'M VISITING MY MOTHER AT MY CHILD-HOOD HOME.

WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO AT THIS HOUR?

BOW

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, OKAY?

I'M SORRY, I HAVE TO GO.

OH!

I LOST TRACK OF TIME!

YOUR MOM, HUH?

UH...

S-SURE.

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

BUT YOU'RE CLEARLY HEADING INTO THAT HOTEL.

YOUR CHILDHOOD HOME...?

.....?

YIKES. THAT WOMAN LIES LIKE A RUG.

.....

I THINK I REMEMBER NOW.

THERE *WAS* A GIRL LIKE THAT, WASN'T THERE?

WAIT...

I'M SO SLEEPY...

URF... I MUST BE REALLY LOW ON BLOOD.

KA-CHK

BA-TNK

RMB

RMB

RMB

RMB

F RMB

F RMB

7

F RMB

F RMB

F RMB

WHO ARE YOU?

GAOOO

OUD...?

CUH...
LAH...

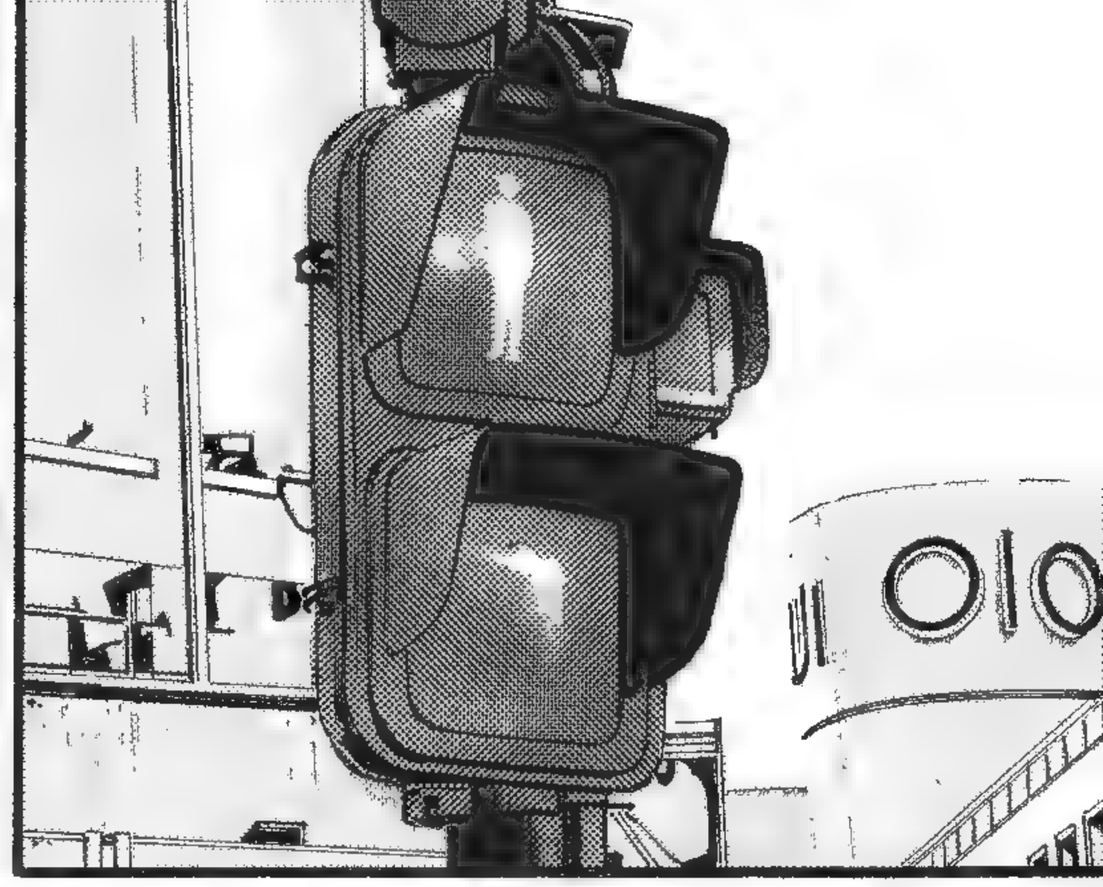
CLOUD
...?

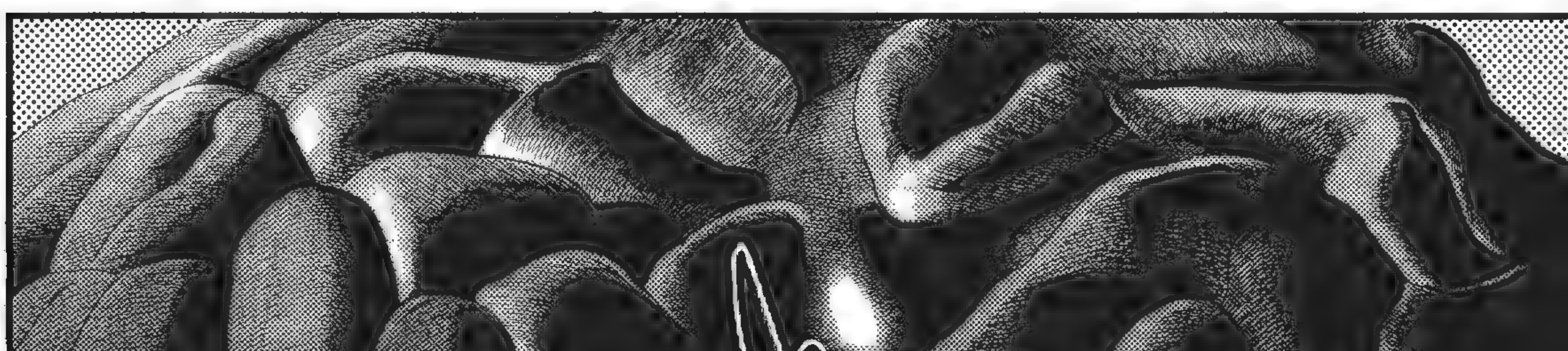
CL...

YOU'RE
REALLY
HER.

YOU'RE
NANAKO,
AREN'T
YOU?

11
FLASH




BA-
DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

IT'S BACK TO NORMAL.

GET OUT OF THE WAY, MAN!

THUMP

WHAT A CREEP!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?

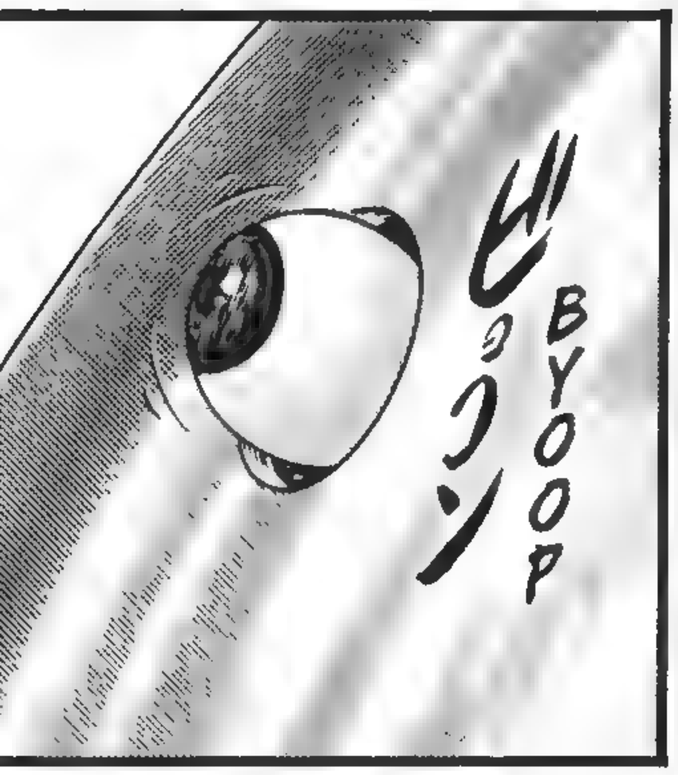
GLANCE

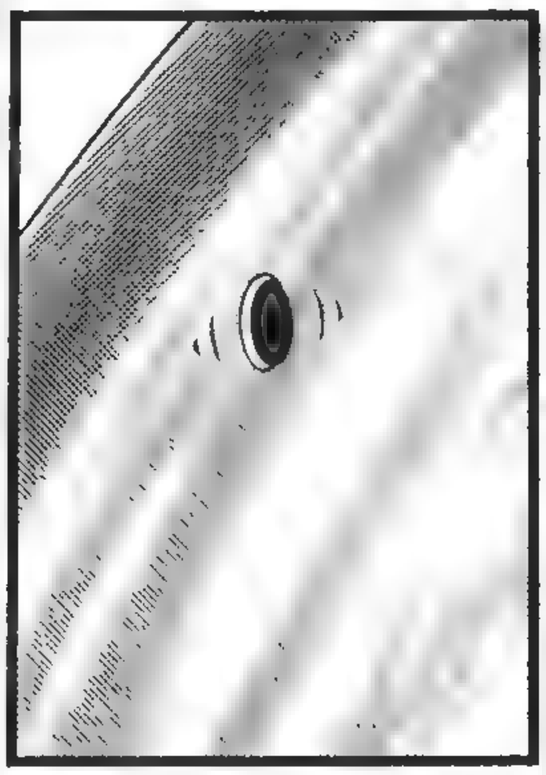
GLANCE

RUSTLE.

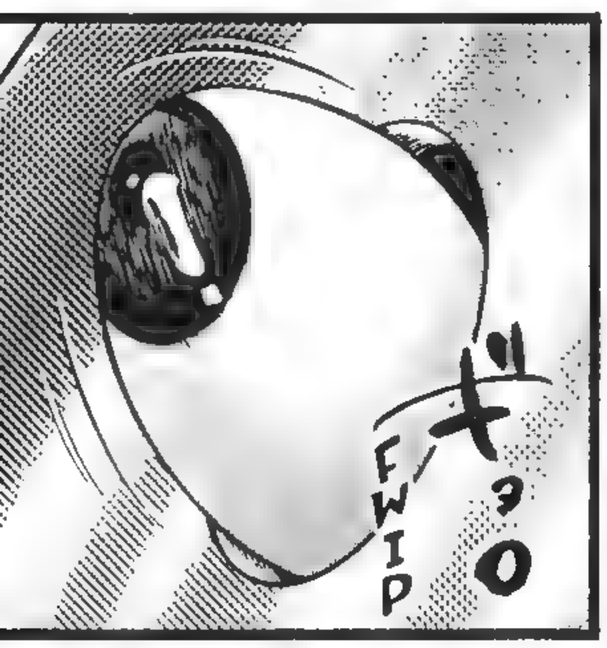
FLUTTER

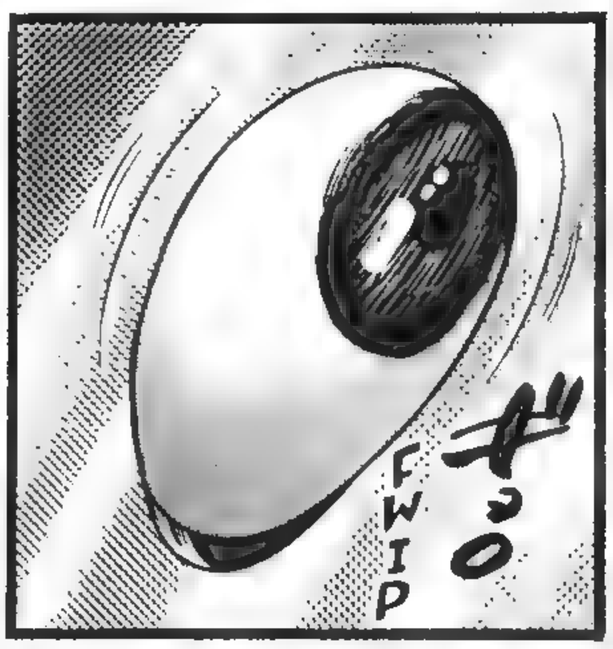
PECK

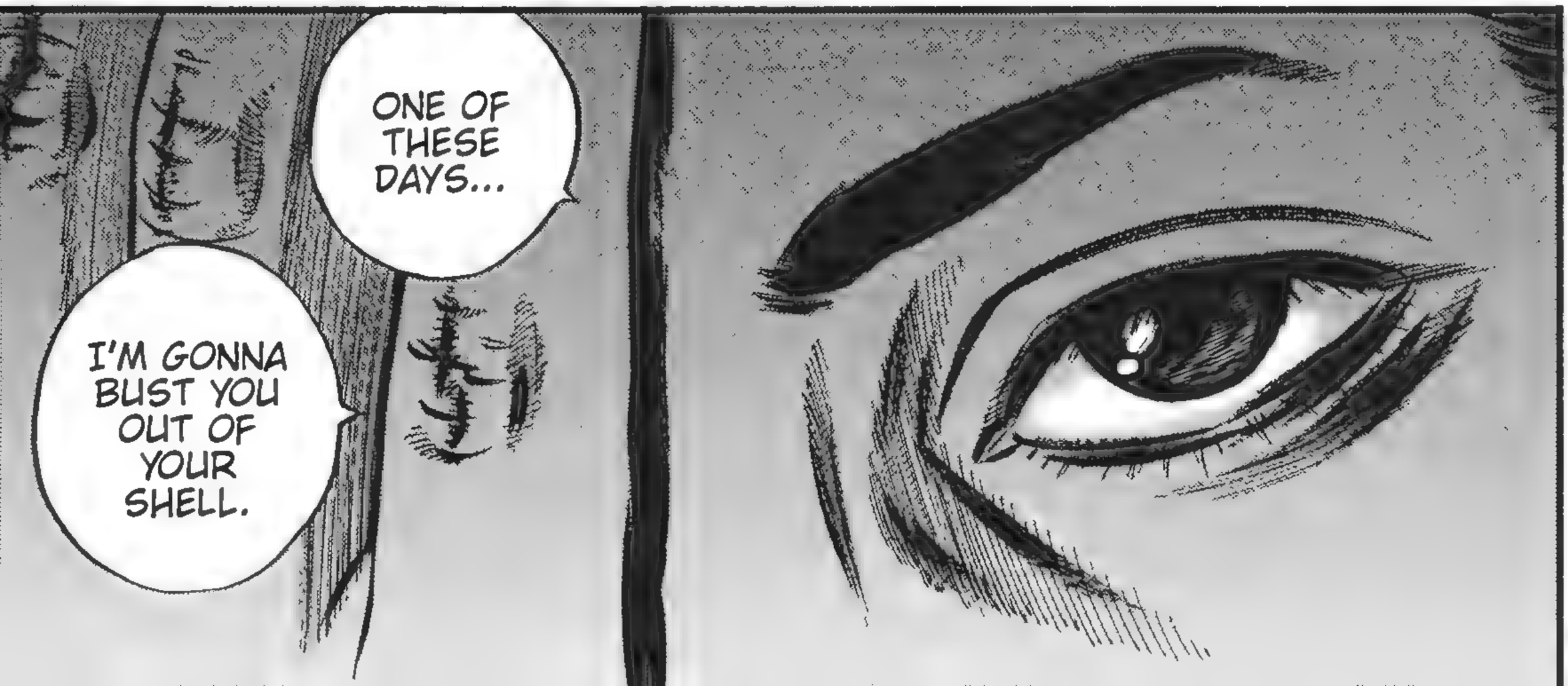

ビョン
BYOOP



I WONDER WHAT'S INSIDE IT?
THERE'S THAT EGG AGAIN...


FWIP


FWIP


ONE OF THESE DAYS...
I'M GONNA BUST YOU OUT OF YOUR SHELL.

KEEP
OUT

AHH...

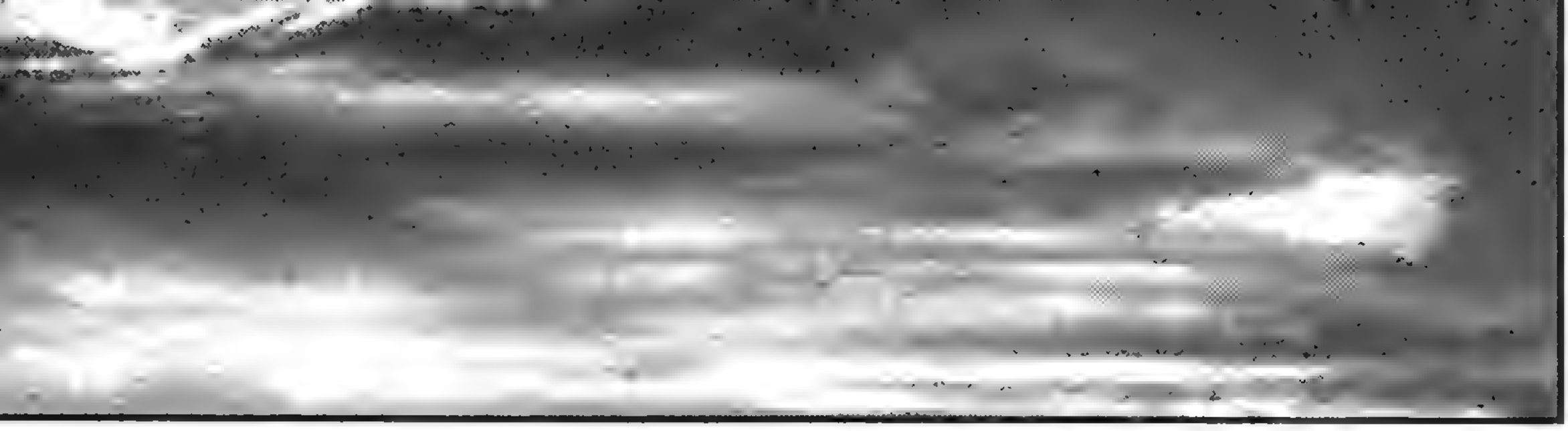
WHAT A GREAT VIEW.

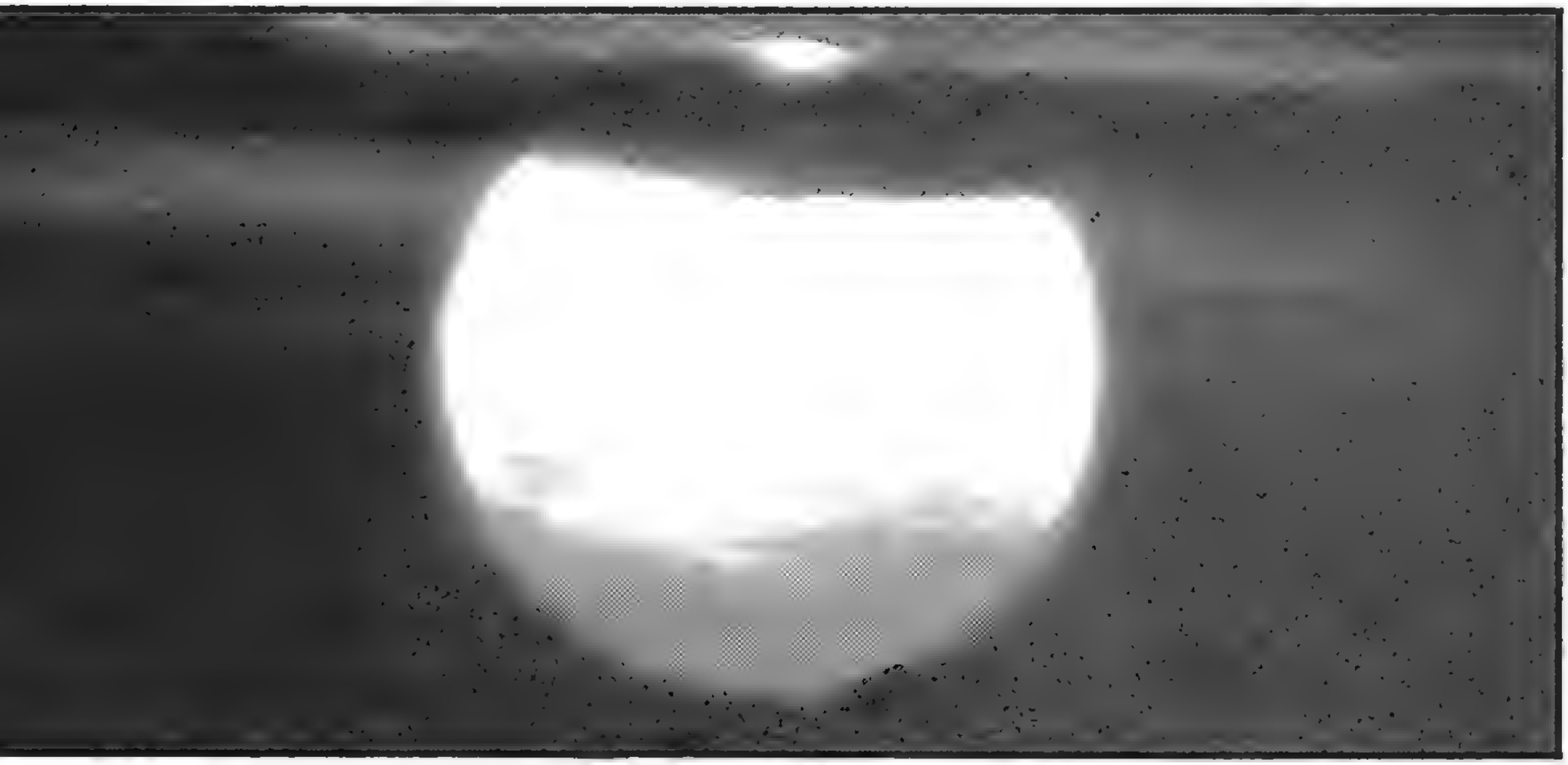
SO COLD...

S...

!

I'M TIRED...



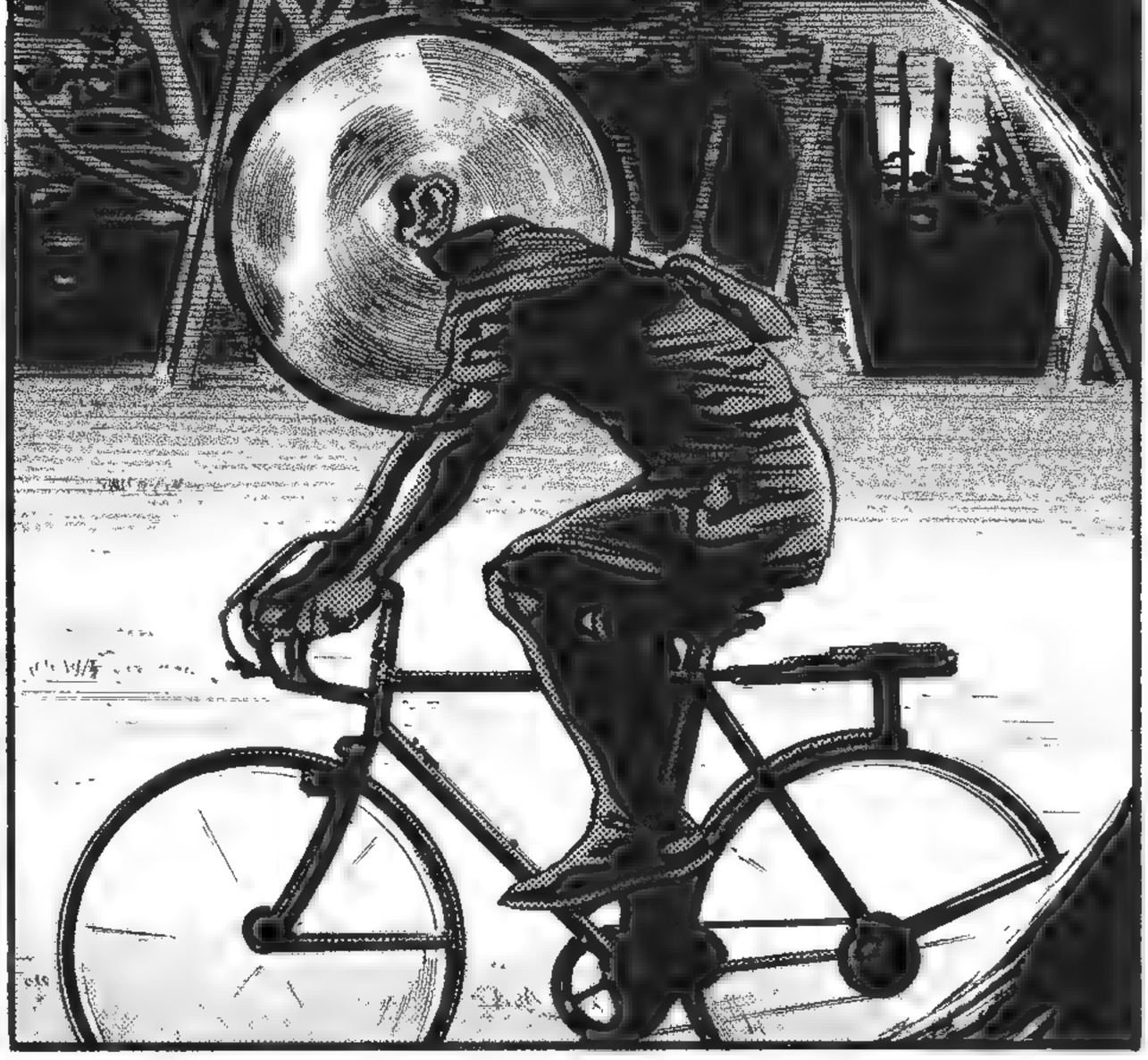


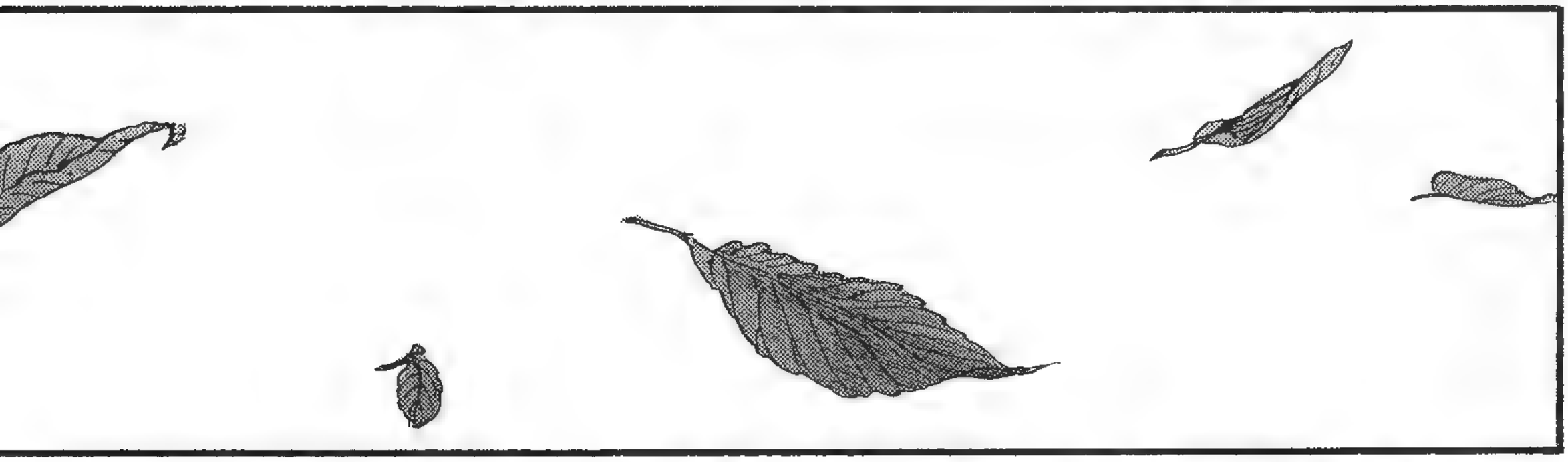
IT'S SO BRIGHT...

IT...

URGH...

SUN'S GOING DOWN ALREADY, HUH...?





BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

GOOD EVENING.

I WAS JUST A LITTLE DRUNK, IS ALL.

Y...

YEAH.

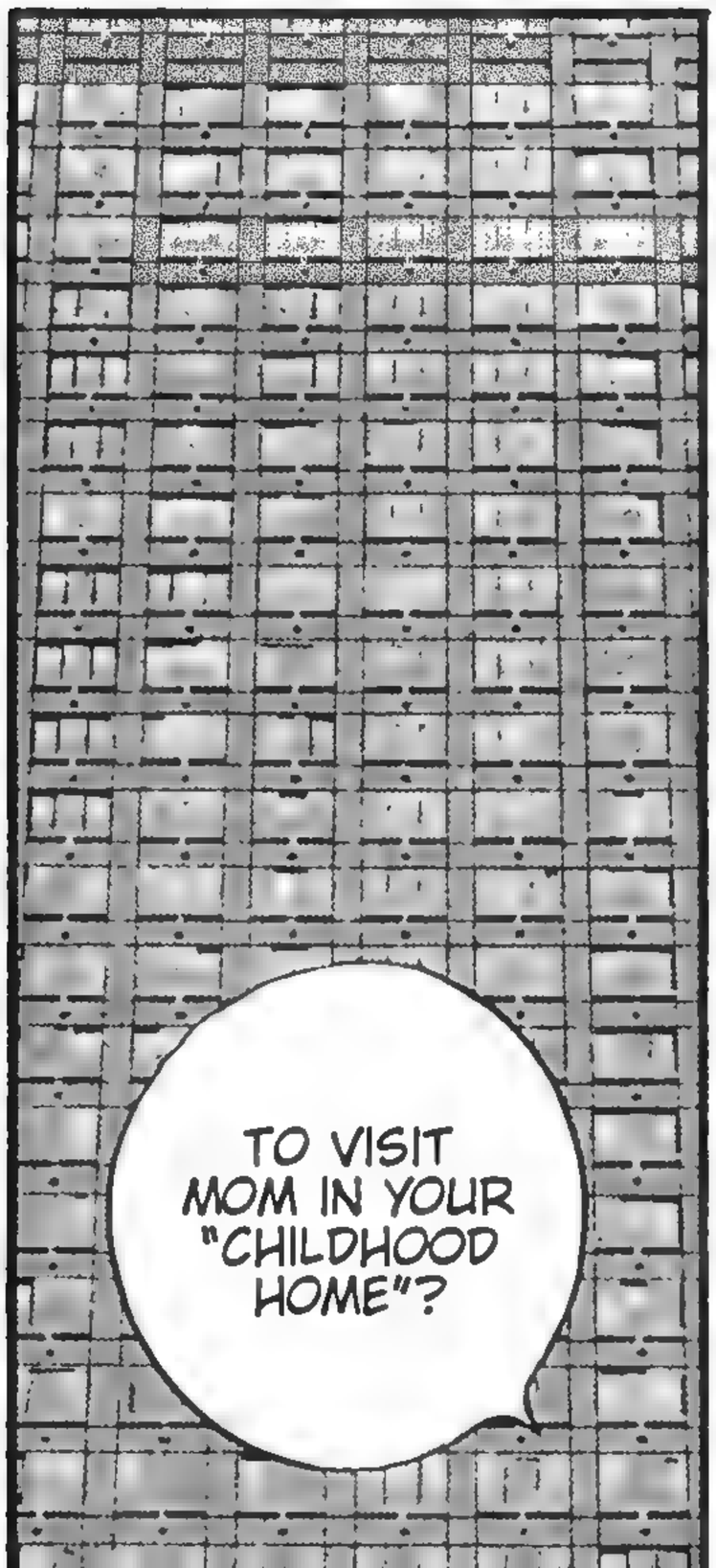
WERE YOU OKAY AFTER I LEFT YESTERDAY?

WINK

WHRRR

ARE YOU SURE?

YOU LOOK PRETTY PALE TODAY TOO.


TO VISIT MOM IN YOUR "CHILDHOOD HOME"?

?
GONNA HANG OUT THERE AGAIN TODAY?

THAT'S A HOTEL.

EXCUSE ME?!

CHILD-HOOD HOME...?

.....??

.....

AREN'T YOU?

YOU'RE MAKIMURA YUKI...SAN...

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A LIVING...

AND WHERE DID WE FIRST MEET, MAKIMURA-SAN?

MY NAME...

IS NOT MAKIMURA.

.....

IT'S...

SATO MICHIKO.

AND...

I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE IN MY LIFE!

HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE!

……?

PFFT!

MY NAME IS MAKIMURA.

I TOOK THE JOKE TOO FAR, DIDN'T I?

SORRY!

WE MET AT A HOUSE PARTY THAT YOUR RECEPTIONIST, AYA, WAS KIND ENOUGH TO INVITE ME TO.

……

YOU'RE AYA'S...

RIGHT!

OH...

WINK...

MM-HMM. AT KAZU-KUN'S HIGH RISE IN TAKANAWA.

KAZU-KUN...

!

YOU AND I HAD DINNER TOGETHER. REMEMBER?

AFTER THAT...

THANKS AGAIN FOR THAT.

SLUMP

I HAD A REALLY... GREAT...

AH...

TIME!

SMILE

SHUDDER

ANOTHER LIE, HUH?

DON'T TELL ME YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER?

MY GOSH.

COME ON.

DON'T YOU REMEMBER ...

WHAT YOU DID TO ME?

ハ ハ ハ SHFFT SHFFT SHFFT

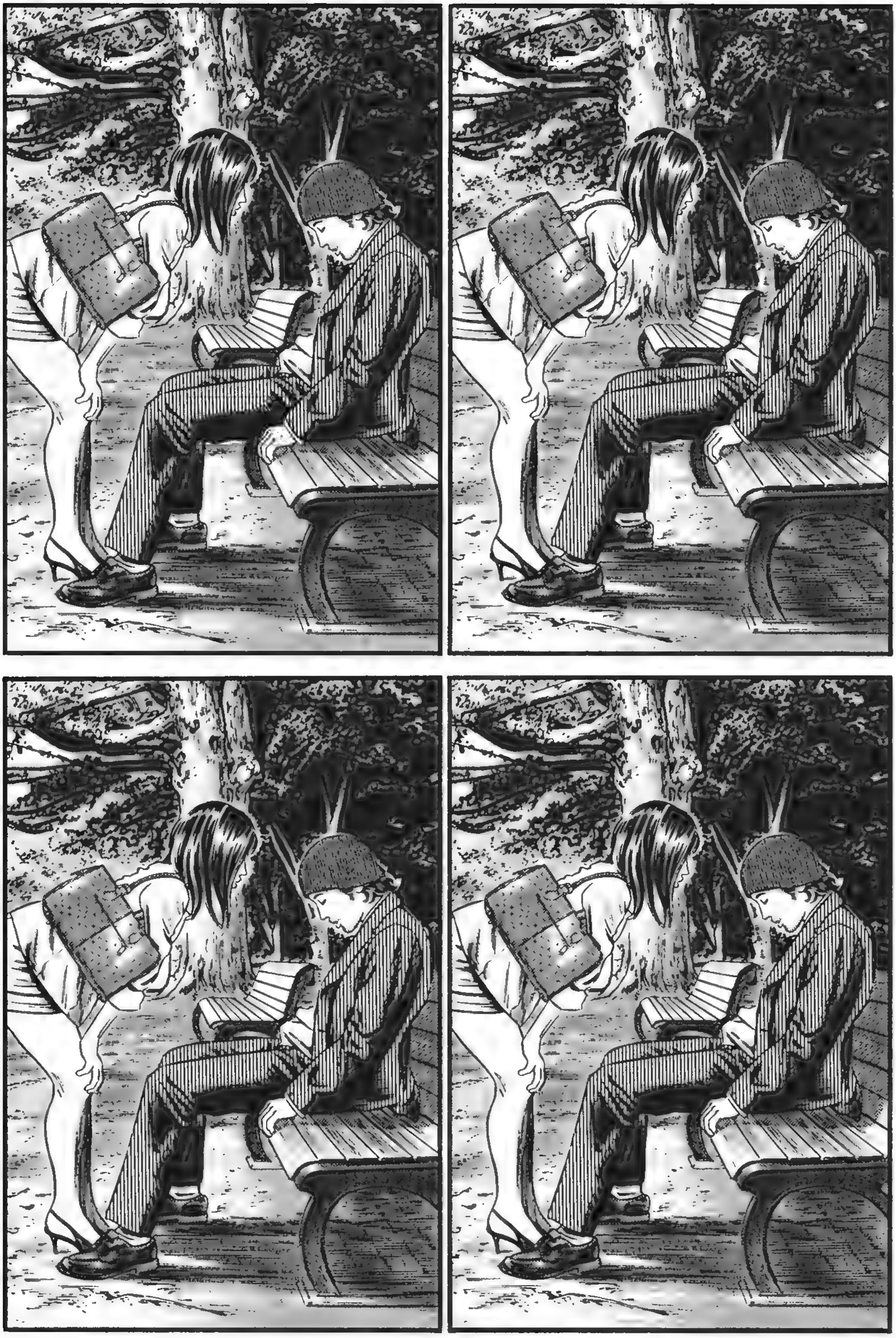
ハ ハ ハ SHFFT SHFFT SHFFT

YOU LIED TO ME TOO!

FUU...

?...

SLUMP



SHIFT

LEAN

NN...

ヒュー

...?

BWOO

!

OH.

GRAB

NOW I KNOW YOU.

WHERE DID YOU LEAVE YOUR FACE?

LOOK AT YOU.

ALL YOUR FEATURES HAVE BEEN WASHED AWAY.

YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOUR *OWN FACE*, HAVE YOU?

CHLP
CHLP
CHLP

SHLK
SHLK

I KNEW IT. YOU *ARE* NANAKO, AREN'T YOU?

NYRR...

GYNRR

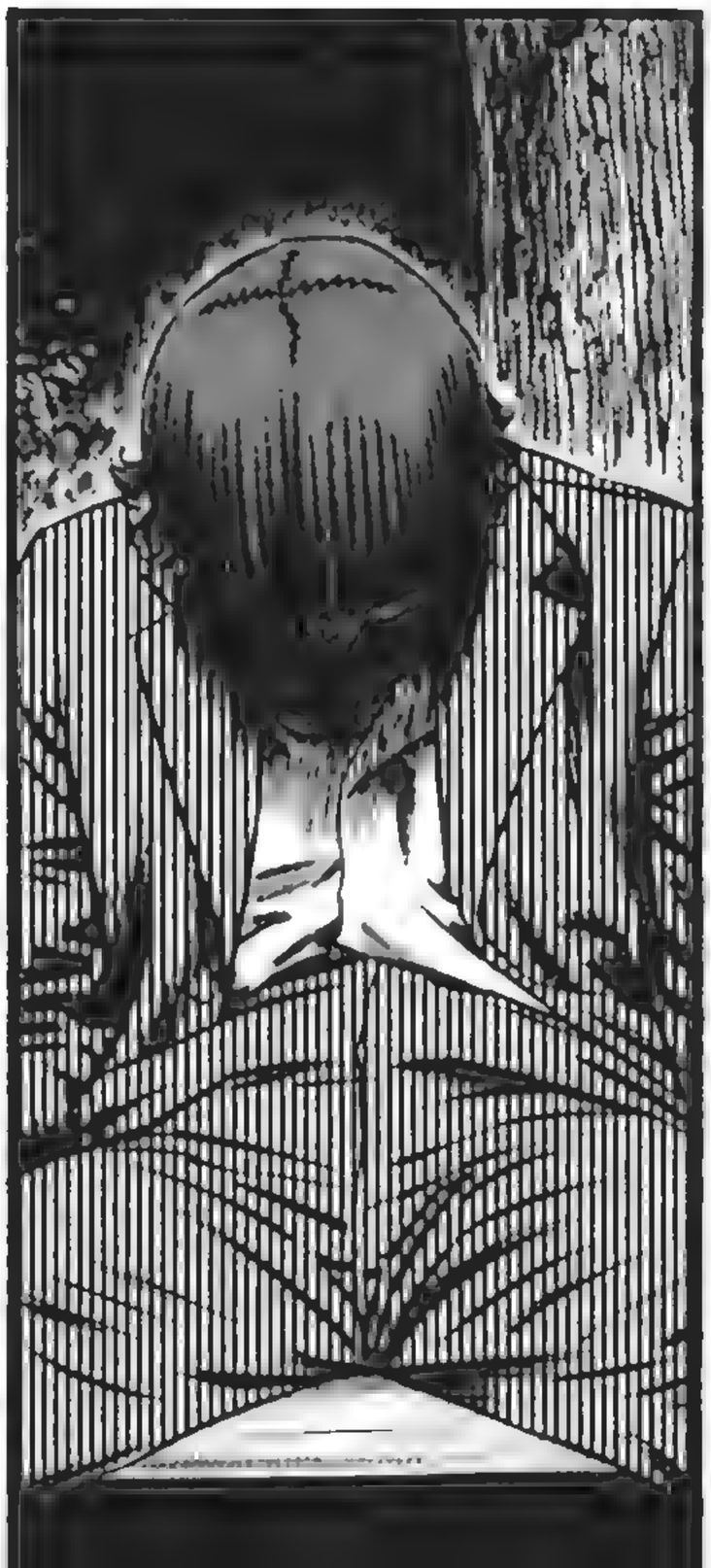
SHOVE

ガクッ

ジンジンジン

WHMP

SKSH



PAFF
PAFF
PAFF

TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK

!

.....

NAKOSHI-SAN...

?!

PLIP

PLIP

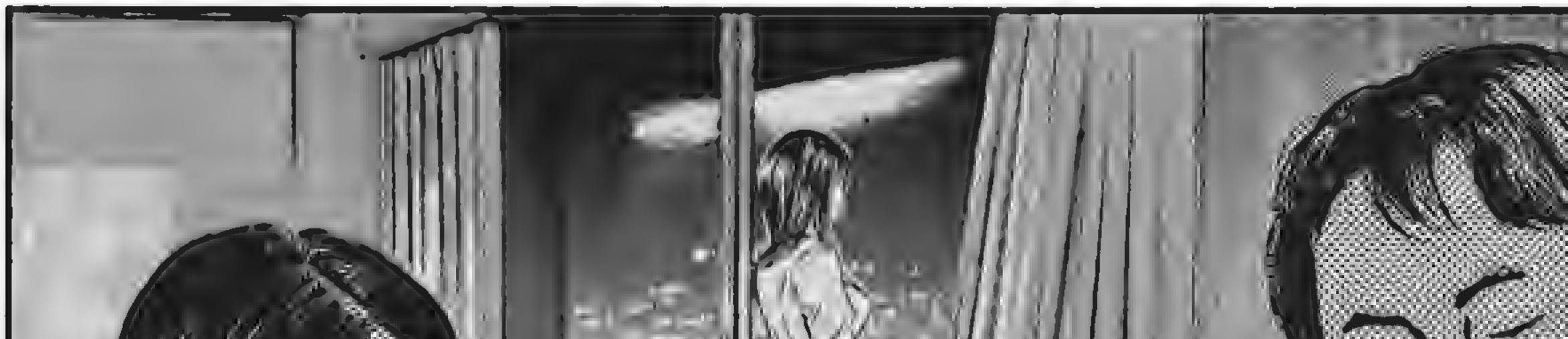
NAKOSHI-SAN?

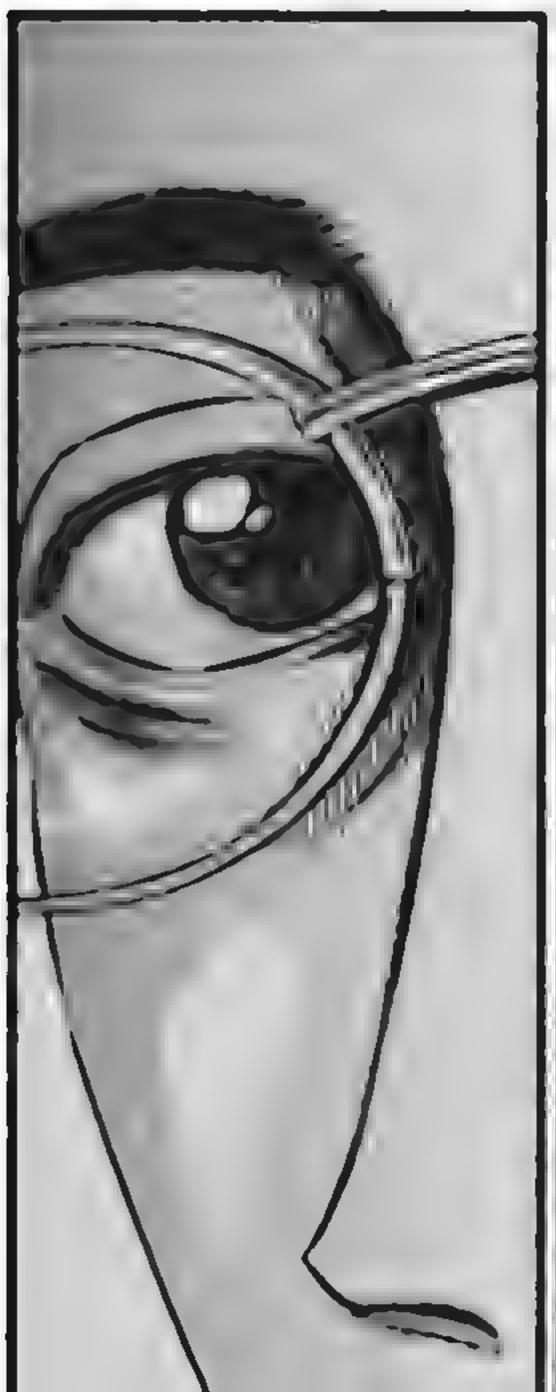
WHP

NAKOSHI-SAN!

NAKOSHI-SAN?!

NAKOSHI-
SAN!!





Bank of Nanban Tokyo Branch
Nanami Suzuno
Nanami

BLINK

AND AYA INTRODUCED US.

WE DID MEET IN KAZU'S HIGH-RISE APARTMENT.

SHE'S RIGHT.

NANAMI...?

HER NAME WAS...

OH!

!

ARE YOU AWAKE YET?

GA-CHAK

SO THIS IS YOUR PLACE, HUH?

!

YOU GAVE ME YOUR WORD YOU WOULDN'T DO IT YOURSELF!

YOU ARE COM-PLETELY INSANE.

.....!

AND AFTER I TOLD YOU A MILLION TIMES HOW UNBELIEV-ABLY, STUPIDLY DANGEROUS IT'D BE... MORON.

YOU JUST LET IT FESTER TILL THE WHOLE THING WAS SO INFLAMED AND FILLED WITH PUS YOU BROKE OUT IN A FEVER. LITTLE WONDER YOU WERE OUT COLD FOR TWO DAYS.

DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO SEW IT UP PROPERLY...

THAT'S NOT THE POINT!

FOR TWO WHOLE DAYS?

I WAS OUT...

WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU *THINKING* ?!!

YOU DRILLED A HOLE THROUGH YOUR OWN DAMN *SKULL!* IF YOU'D MADE EVEN ONE WRONG MOVE, YOU'D HAVE DIED INSTANTLY!

?

SMIRK...

?!

BUT IT WORKED.

I CAN SEE THEM AGAIN.

TAP TAP TAP

OH, GIMME A BREAK.

THEY'RE BACK, AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO THIS.

SHFF

!

?

FWP

SHF

THIS IS HER, RIGHT?

THAT WOMAN YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT WHOSE FACE KEEPS CHANGING?

YEAH ...

.....

?

SO...DO YOU KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING IN THAT HOTEL?

!!

SHE'S GOT QUITE A FEW.

MEETING ALL HER BEAUS.

A FEW...?

FLAP

BASED ON MY SURVEILLANCE THE PAST TWO DAYS, IT'S THESE GUYS.

AND A SALARY-MAN.

A HOSPITAL'S CHIEF PHYSICIAN...

A BROKERAGE FIRM DIRECTOR...

SEEMS SHE'S GOT THREE SEPARATE SUGAR DADDIES.

.....

HUH?

MORE THAN THREE.

!

I SAW HER WITH SOME OTHER GUYS TOO.

!

MEETING ALL THOSE LOVERS IN ONE SINGLE HOTEL? TALK ABOUT RISKY.

BUT YIKES.

SHE SURE GETS AROUND!

REALLY ?

BUT YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW HIGH HER GUARD IS.

SEEMS CARELESS ...

?

.....!

I TRIED TAILING HER TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER...

BUT SHE ALWAYS SLIPS AWAY ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

NANAMI ...

NOT HER NAME, HER AGE, HER ADDRESS...

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I'VE GOT ALMOST NOTHING ON HER!

PARDON?

.....

HER NAME.

I THINK...

IT'S NANAMI.

I FINALLY REMEMBERED SOME OF OUR FIRST MEETING.

!

?

SO...WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU TWO?

BUT SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE YOU STILL SAW AS A HOMUNCULUS ...

EVEN AFTER ALL THE OTHERS DISAPPEARED.

SHE DIDN'T LEAVE MUCH OF AN IMPRESSION.

I KNOW YOU SAID THAT BACK THEN...

SOMETHING *MAJOR* MUST HAVE HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU. RIGHT?

ERGO...

.....

ALL I CAN REMEMBER IS THAT SOME GIRL I WAS MESSING AROUND WITH AT WORK INTRODUCED ME TO HER AT A HOUSE PARTY.

.....

DID YOU SLEEP WITH HER?

NOT *SURE?!* FOR GOD'S SAKE...

I'M NOT SURE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

?!

DID HER FACE LOOK THE SAME BACK THEN?

IN ANY CASE...

I MEAN, SHE'S HAD **WORK** DONE...

JUST LIKE *YOU.*

!!

.....

A BONA FIDE CYBORG.

I CAN TELL. SHE'S MORE SILICONE THAN FLESH.

.....

IF SHE'S HAD ALL HER *REAL* PARTS ADJUSTED, IT MAKES SENSE THAT *YOU'D* SEE HER WITH A THOUSAND FACES.

!

SHE NEVER FOUND LOVE OR MARRIED. SHE'S JUST SEEING GUY AFTER GUY, TRAPPED IN A LIMBO BETWEEN HUMAN CONNECTION AND LONELINESS.

POOR THING. EVEN AFTER SURGERY...

JUST LIKE YOU, ISN'T SHE, NAKOSHI-SAN?

?

BY THE WAY...THAT EX OF YOURS, THE ONE WHO "SAW" YOU...

?!

GLANCE...

THE ONE WHO COULD SEE HOMUNCULI...

I HAVE NO IDEA.

WHERE SHE IS NOW? WHAT SHE'S DOING?

DO YOU KNOW...

I...DON'T KNOW ANYMORE.

WHAT DID HER FACE LOOK LIKE?

I CAN'T REMEMBER IT FOR THE LIFE OF ME.

WHAT?!

?

BUT...

YOU FORGET YOUR EX'S FACE *AND* YOUR OWN... JESUS, YOU'VE GOT THE FACIAL MEMORY OF A GOLDFISH!

I DO REMEMBER HER BEING HIDEOUS.

H...

HIDEOUS ?!

!!

SHUT UP.

A LOVE STORY BETWEEN TWO UGGOS, HUH? SHEESH.

A...

.....

UGLY, BUT COULD SEE HOMUNCULI...

UGLY, BUT THE FIRST AND ONLY TO EVER SEE YOU...

!

SHE'S HAD A *TON* OF WORK DONE. ABOUT AS MUCH AS YOU.

YOU KNOW, THIS GIRL WITH THE BOYFRIENDS ...

.....!

SO WHO KNOWS WHAT SHE LOOKED LIKE BEFORE. MAYBE SHE WAS UGLY. EVEN...AS UGLY AS YOUR EX?

YOUR INFLAMMATION HAS GONE DOWN.

WELP.

AND I LEFT YOUR CAR IN THAT PARKING LOT. FILLED YOUR TANK TOO.

I HAD YOUR FAVORITE SUIT AND SHIRT DRY-CLEANED FOR YOU...

SORRY ABOUT THIS.

UH...

SURE.

INSIDE YOUR CAR, THERE'S A BLANKET AND A WEEK'S WORTH OF MEDICINE FOR YOUR HEAD. MAKE SURE YOU TAKE IT, OKAY?

BA-TNK

16"

9

COOL. LATER.

KAW

KAW

KAW

KAW

KAW

BA-TNK

KAW

HEY THERE, CAR GUY!

OH!

HAVEN'T SEEN YA LATELY.

WHATCHA BEEN UP TO?

TUG

HEY, KEN-SAN.

'SUP?

KEH KEH KEH KEH KEH!

OH, YOU KNOW. VISITING MY...YOU KNOW.

REALLY? THAT'S A SHAME.

!

WE LOST EVEN MORE FOLKS SINCE YOU BEEN GONE. EMPTY SPACES EVERYWHERE...

IF ALL THE TENTS ARE REMOVED FROM THIS PARK, WHERE AM I SUPPOSED TO GO?

!

I CAN EVER GO BACK THERE.

THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL...

"SO WHO KNOWS WHAT SHE LOOKED LIKE BEFORE. MAYBE SHE WAS UGLY. EVEN...AS UGLY AS YOUR EX?"

BUT SHE'S... ABOUT THE SAME HEIGHT, I THINK...

HER FACE IS TOTALLY DIFFER-ENT...

TMP

WONDER-FUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

!

NAKOSHI-SAMA!!

OH!

THANKS...

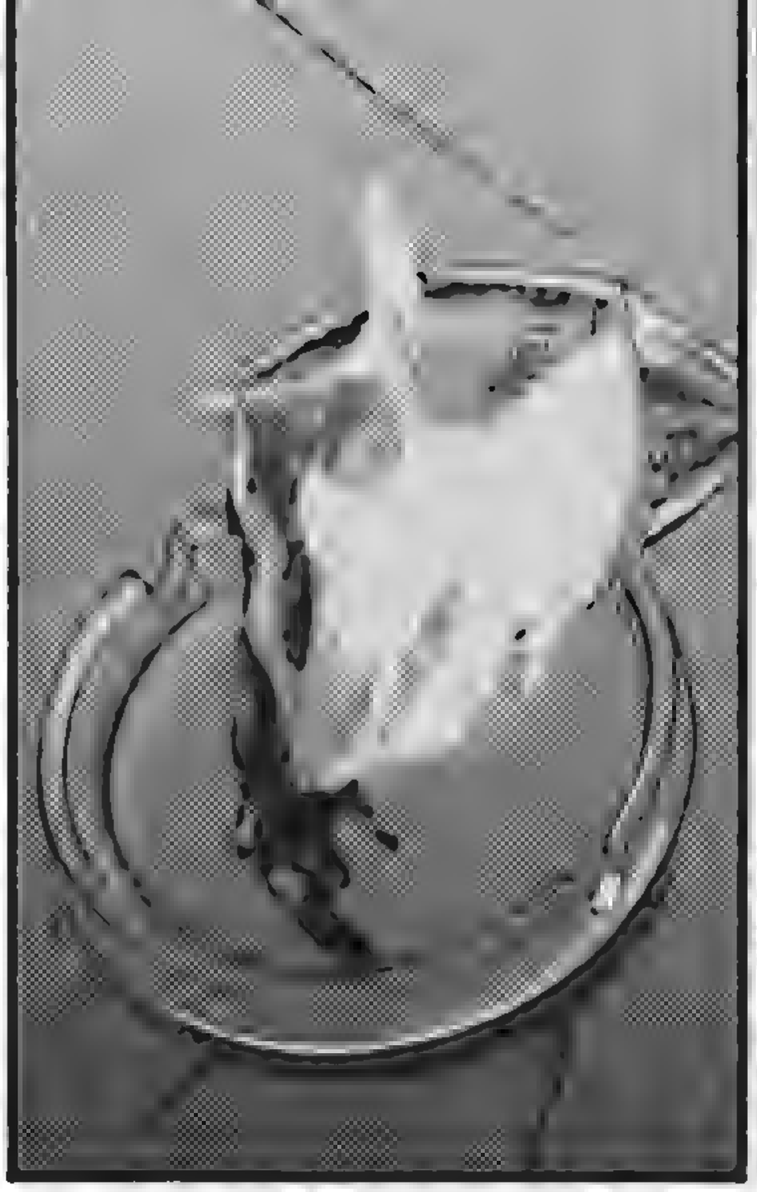
U-UH...

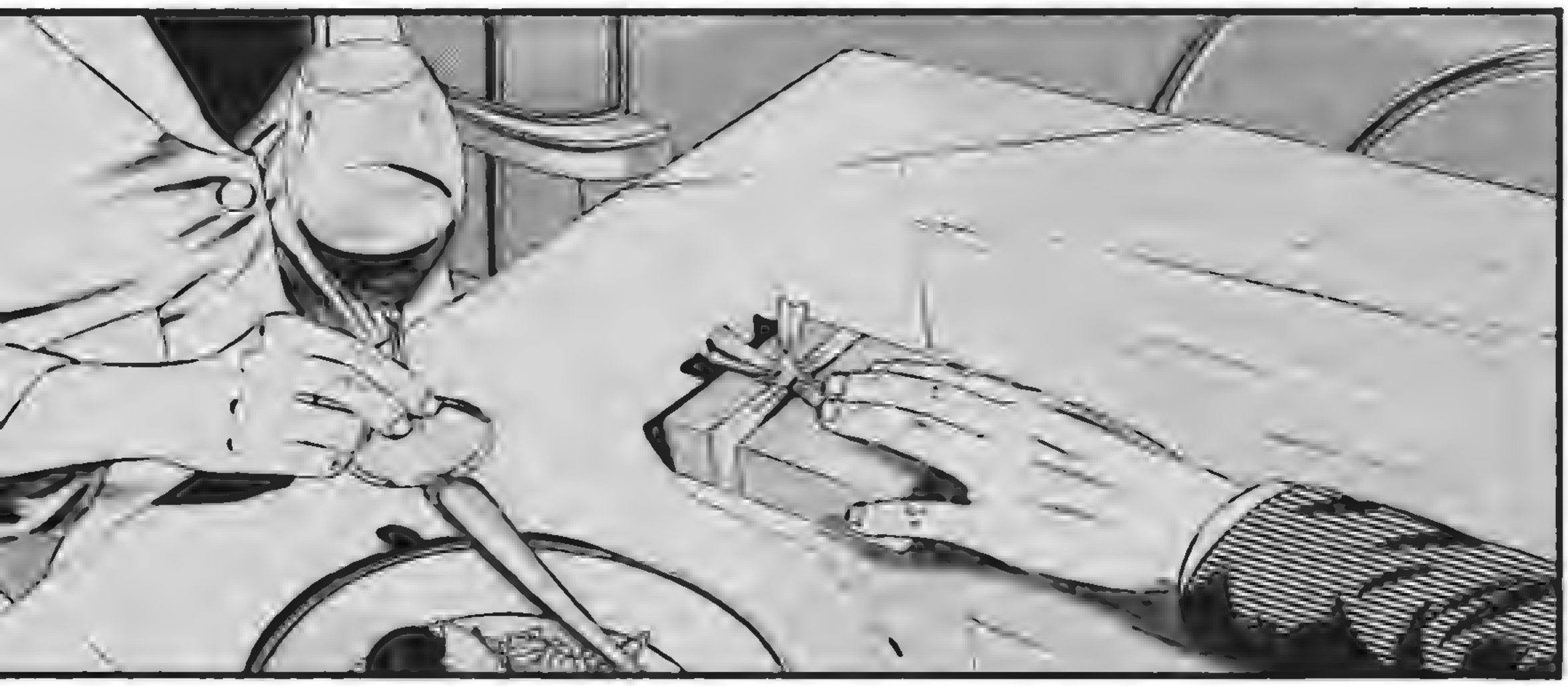
TMP

47

46

!





What's the matter?

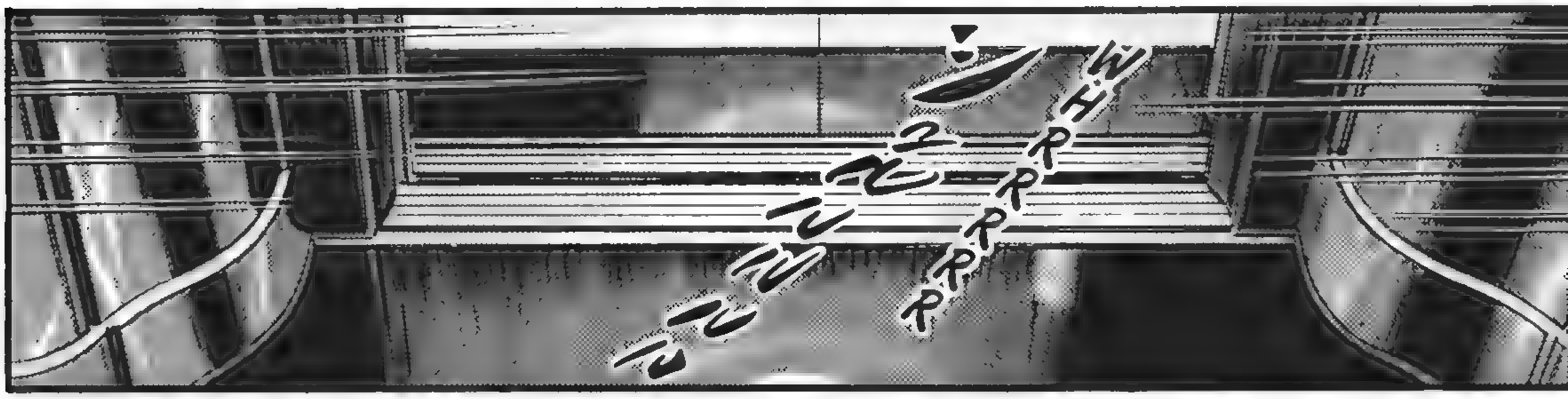
Is there something on my face?

No... nothing at all.

Nothing ...

at all...

ولا حتى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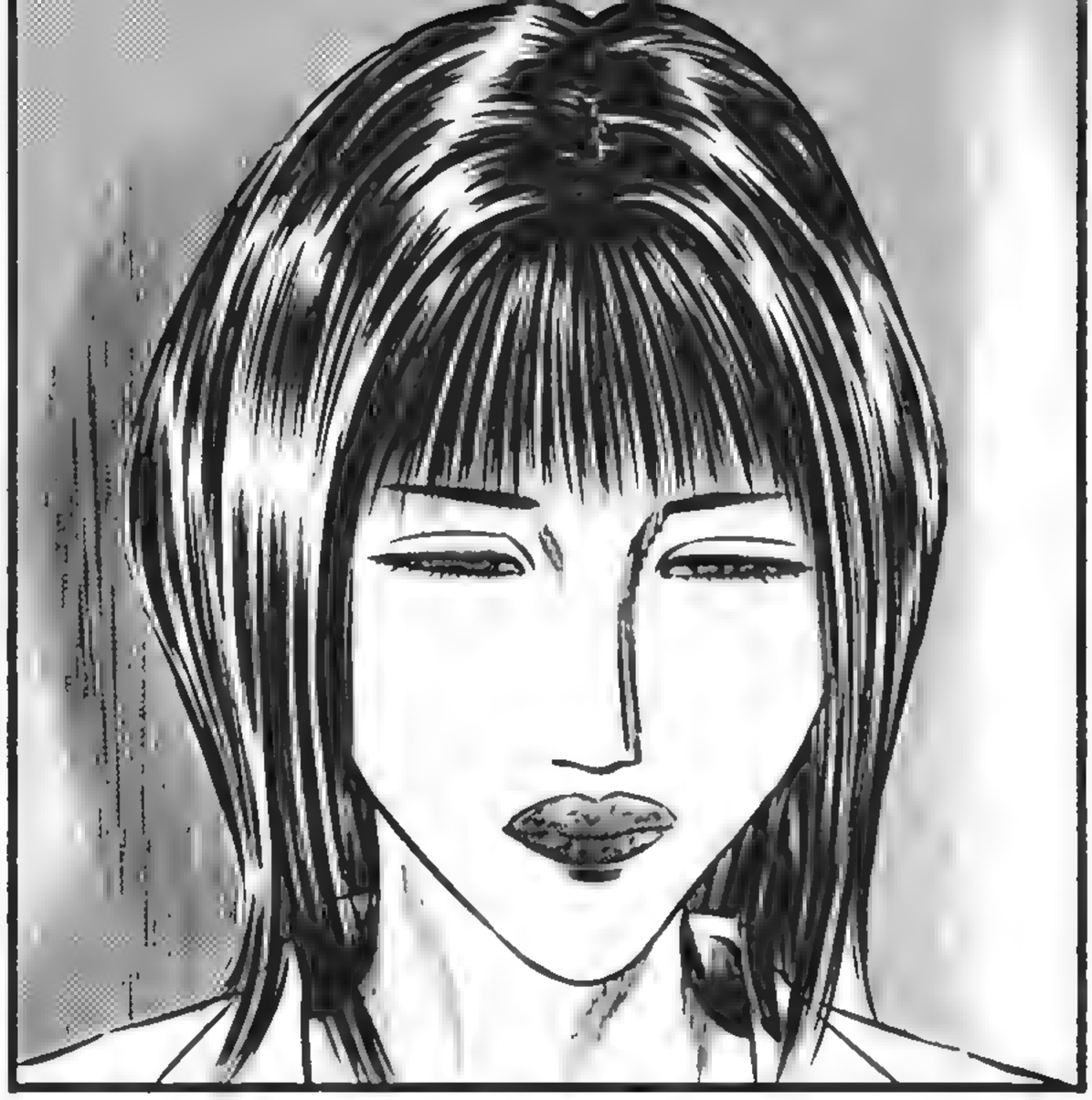
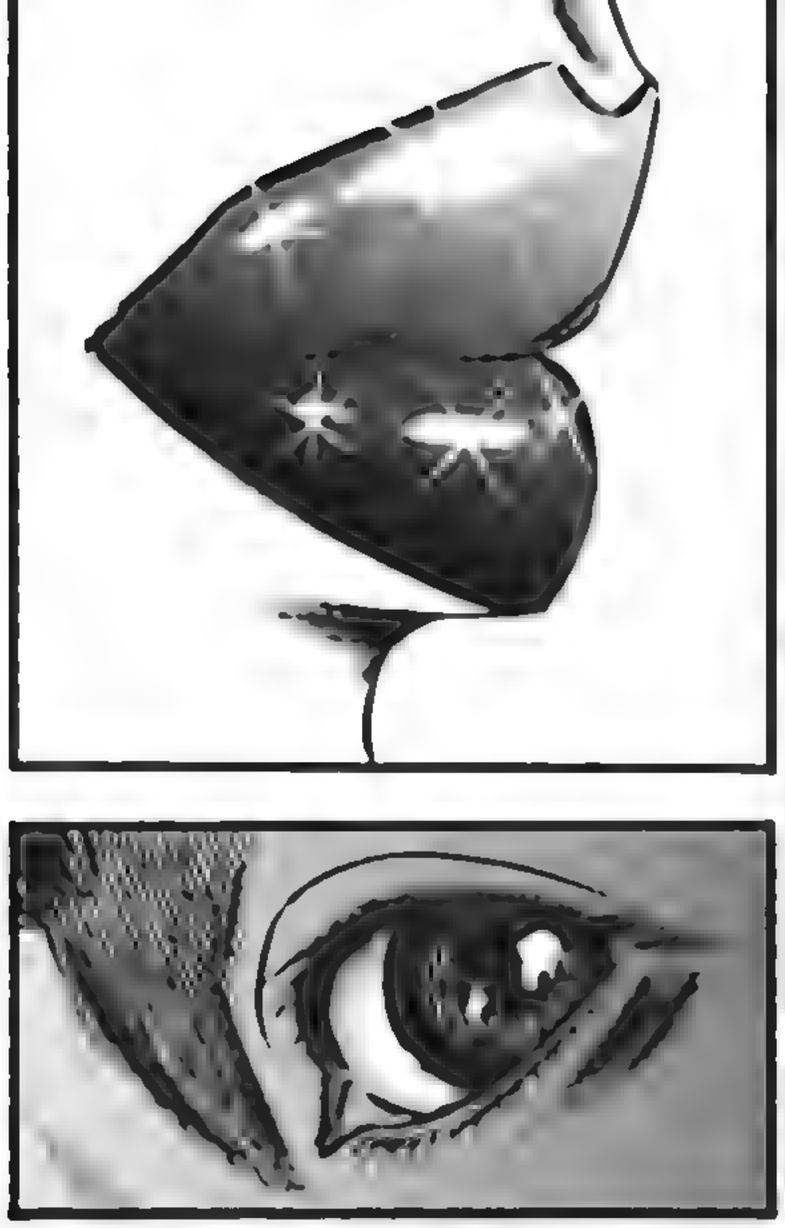
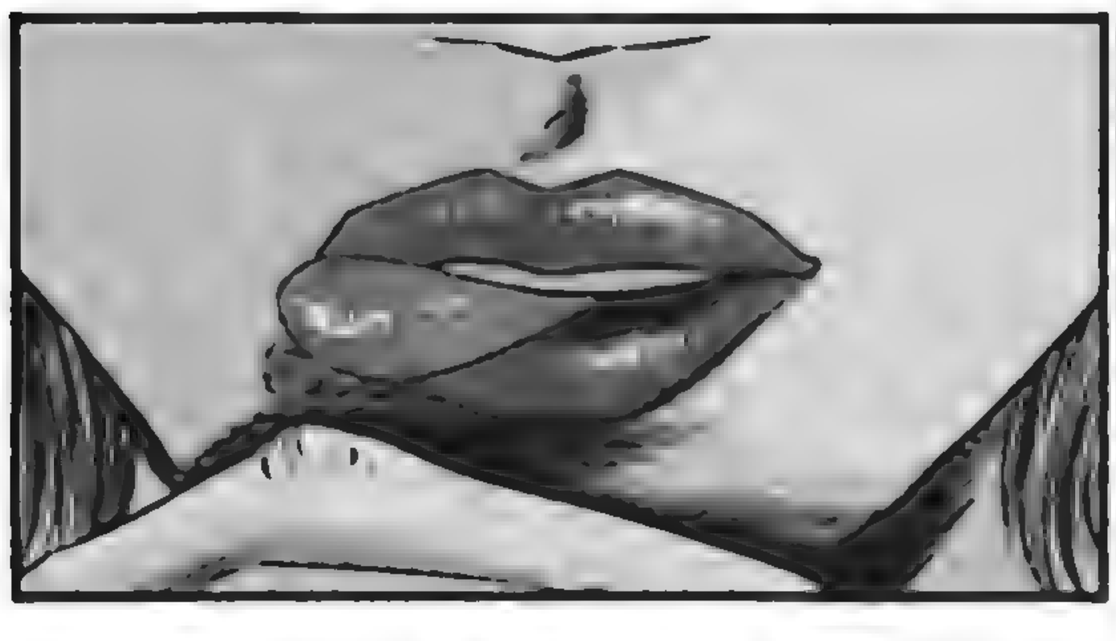
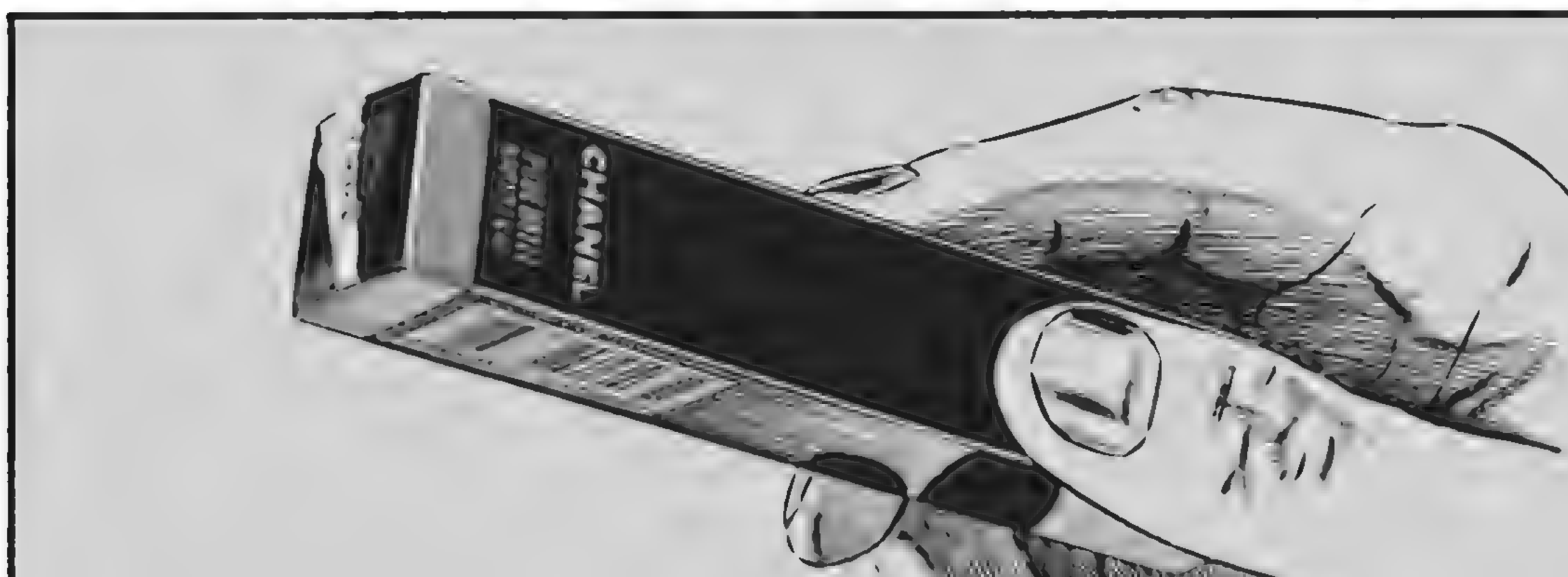
!








CHANEL

.....?

KTAK

Go ahead. Try it on.

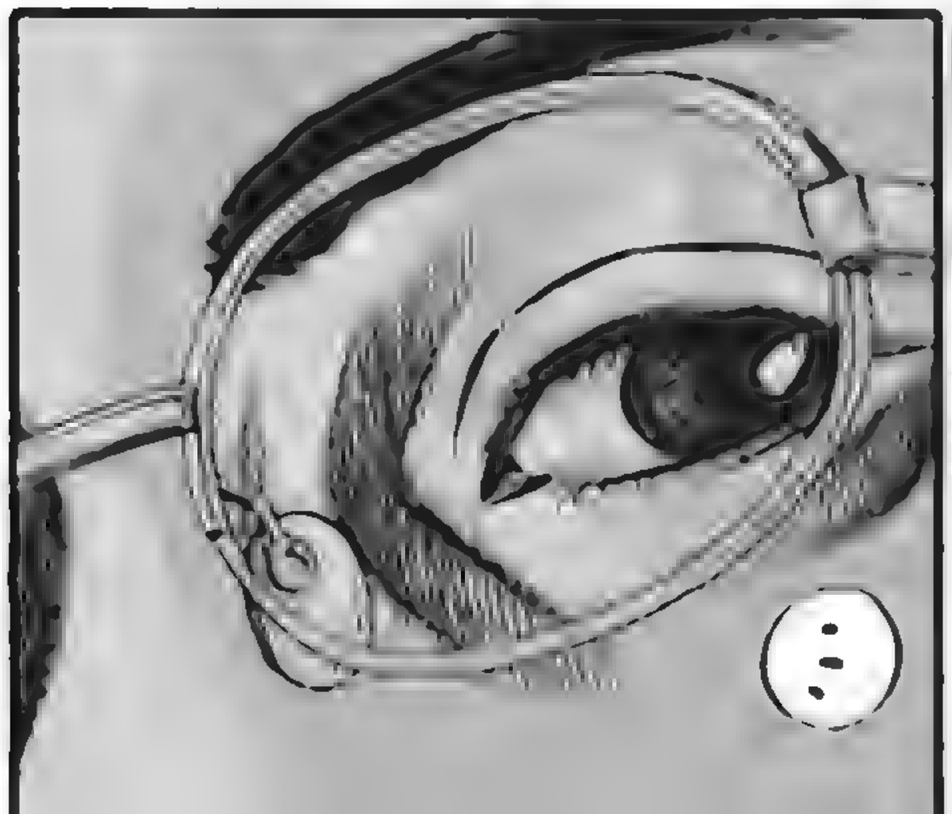
I think the color would really suit you.

Here. Try this gloss.

carry makeup with you *everywhere?*

Do you...

ズズズ…



STACEE

HEY...

SHLK

QUIT IT!

SHLP

!

THERE'S SOMEONE HERE! MNGH...

SHLK SHLP

?

.....

SHLUP

SHLUP

LICK

LICK

SHF...

THUCK

UO!..

PRESS

SHLIK

SHLIK

HER MOUTH IS GONE!

HER...

GLUP

GLUP

GLUP

!

……

……

DHNG

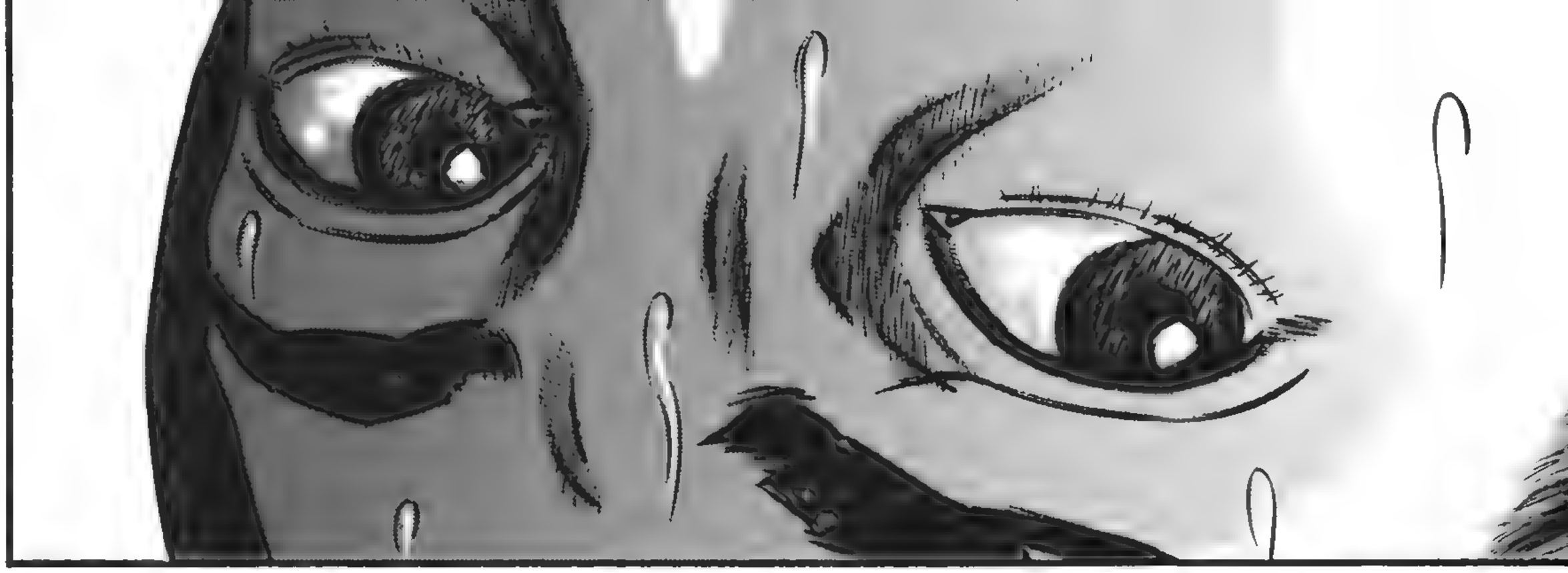
HAAH!

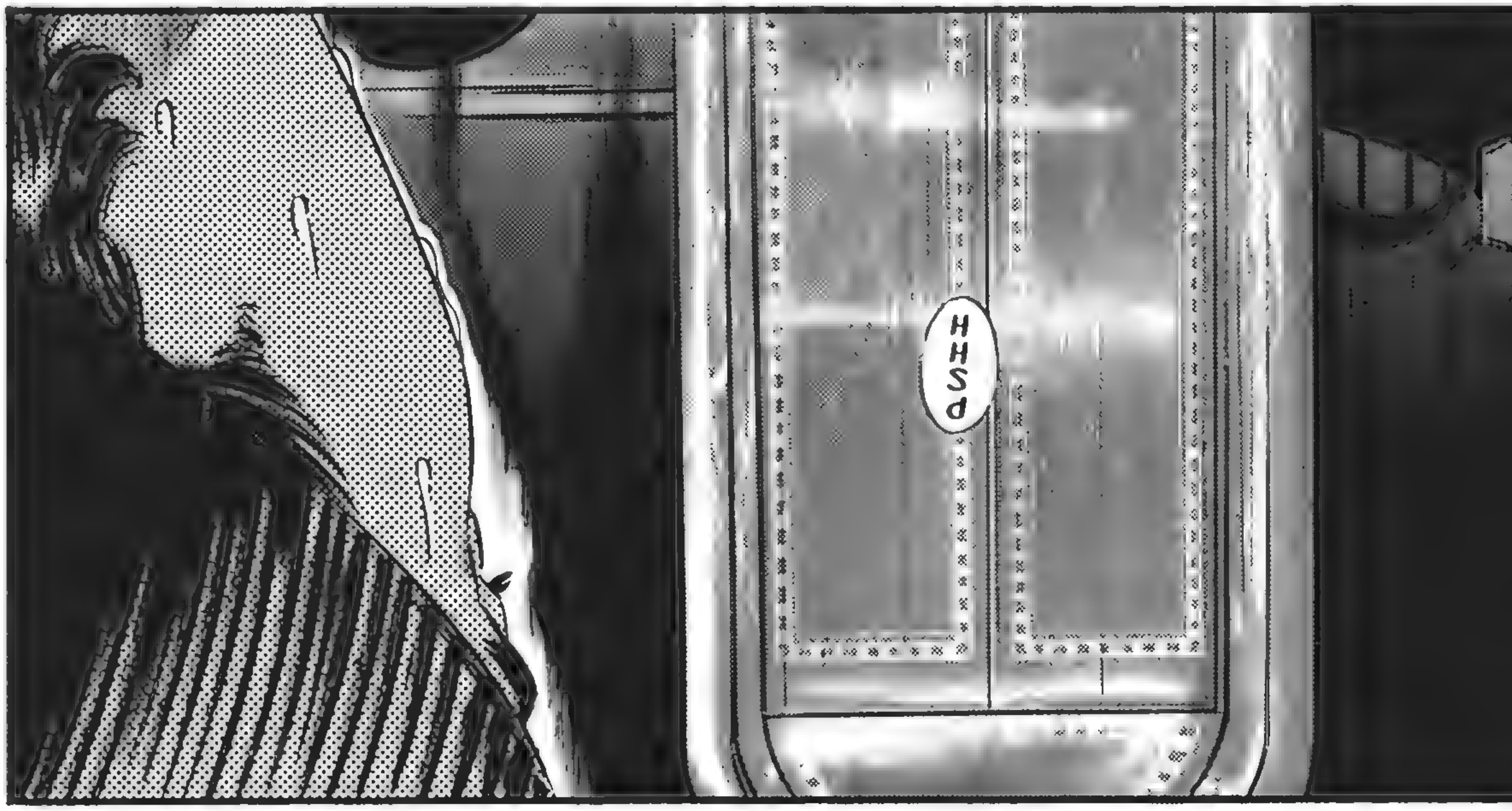
HAAH!

HAAH!

WHP

FWP

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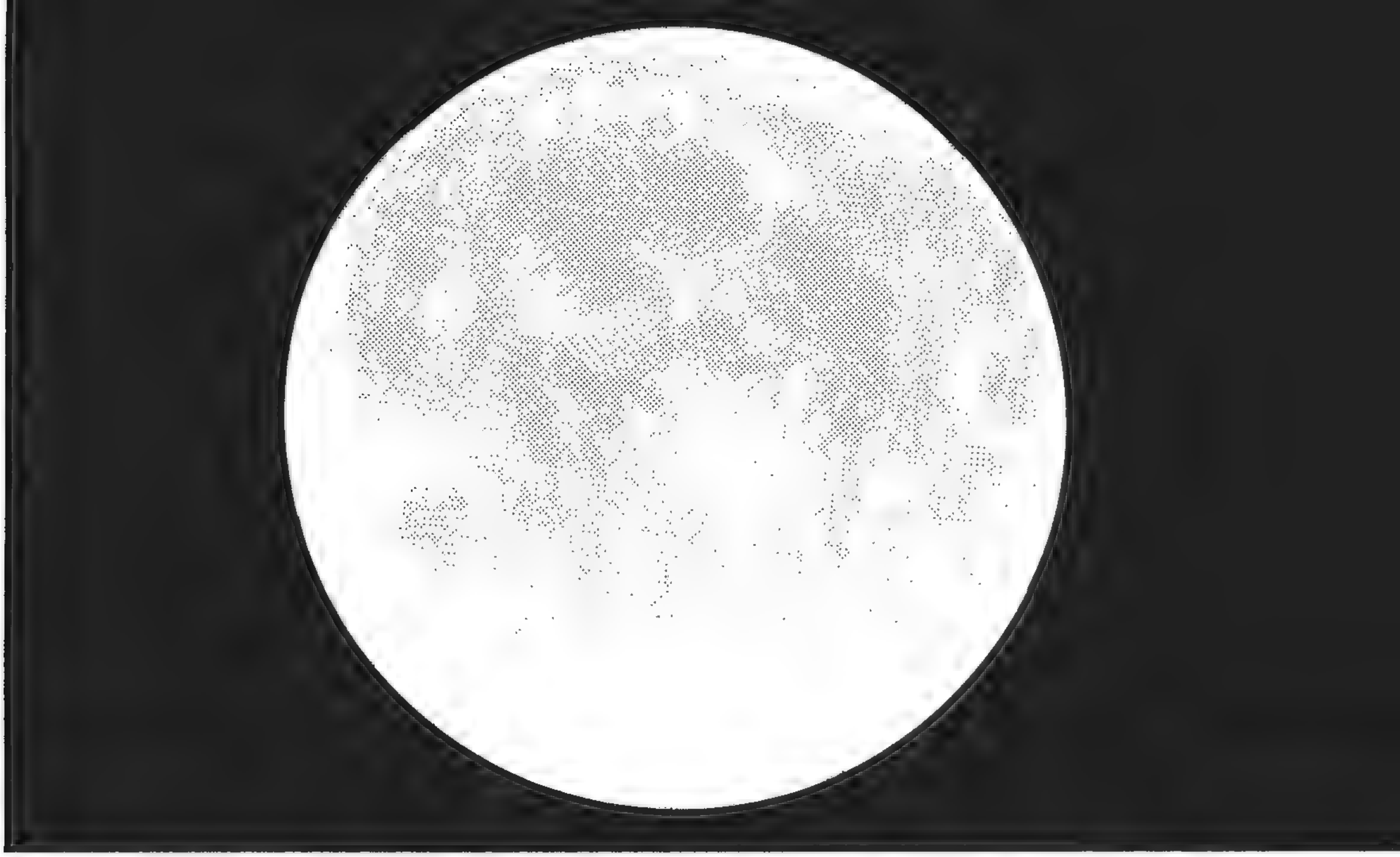
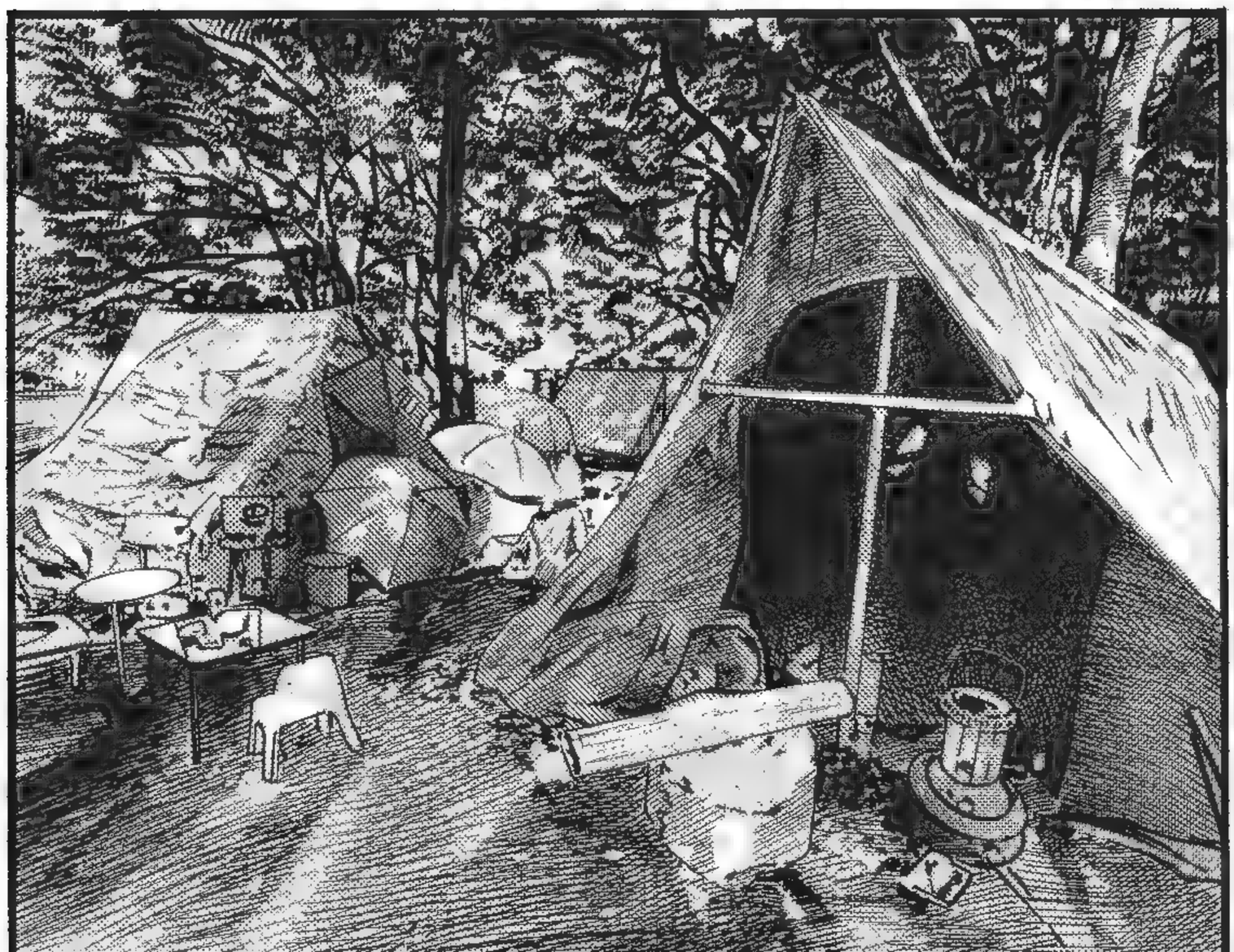




RMB

RMB

RMB

RMB

RMB

RMB

RMB

RMB

RMB

SHE'S HERE.

STARE...

GLANCE

GLANCE

SQUEEZE

GLARE

SHE'S SCANNING EVERY INCH OF THE INSIDE OF MY CAR.

RMB

RMB

RMB

WAVER...

?

!!!

WHOA...

!

TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK

TAP

THIS...

TH...

THIS ISN'T A DREAM!

WASN'T A DREAM AFTER ALL...

THE FACE-LESS WOMAN ...

NA...

RMB

RMB

NANAKO ...?

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

……？

ｽｽｽｽ

ｽｽｽｽ

ｽｽｽｽ

SMILE

WHATCHA DRAWING THERE...

NANAKO?

SKRIT

SKRIT

SKRIT

SKRIT

SKRIT

SKRIT

SKRIT

SKRIT

SKRIT

SKRIT

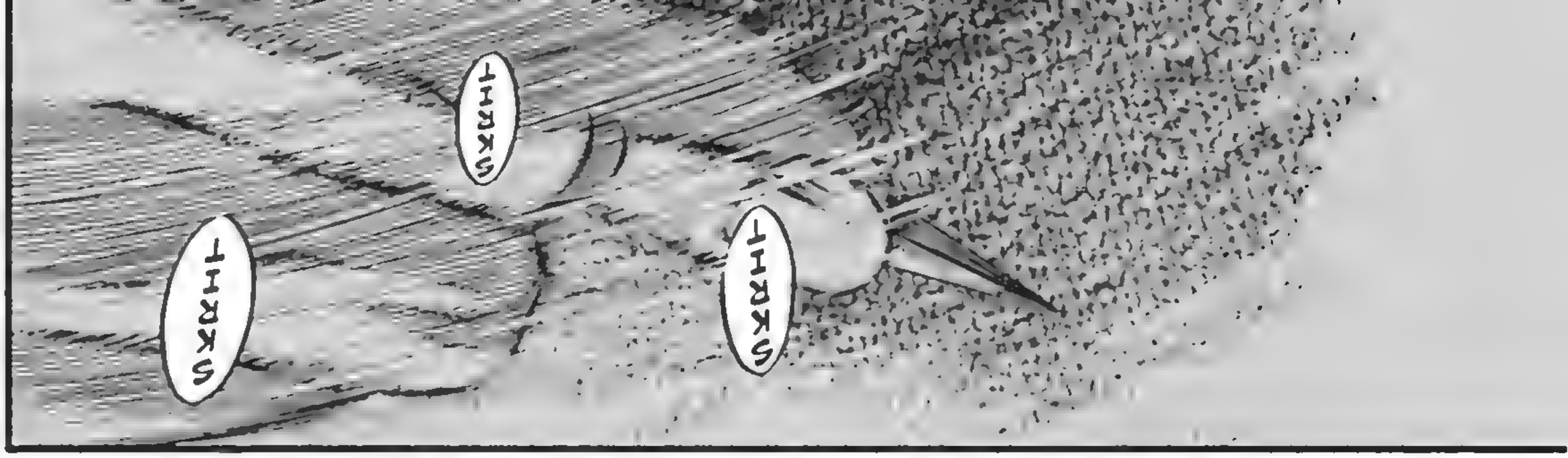
.....?

!

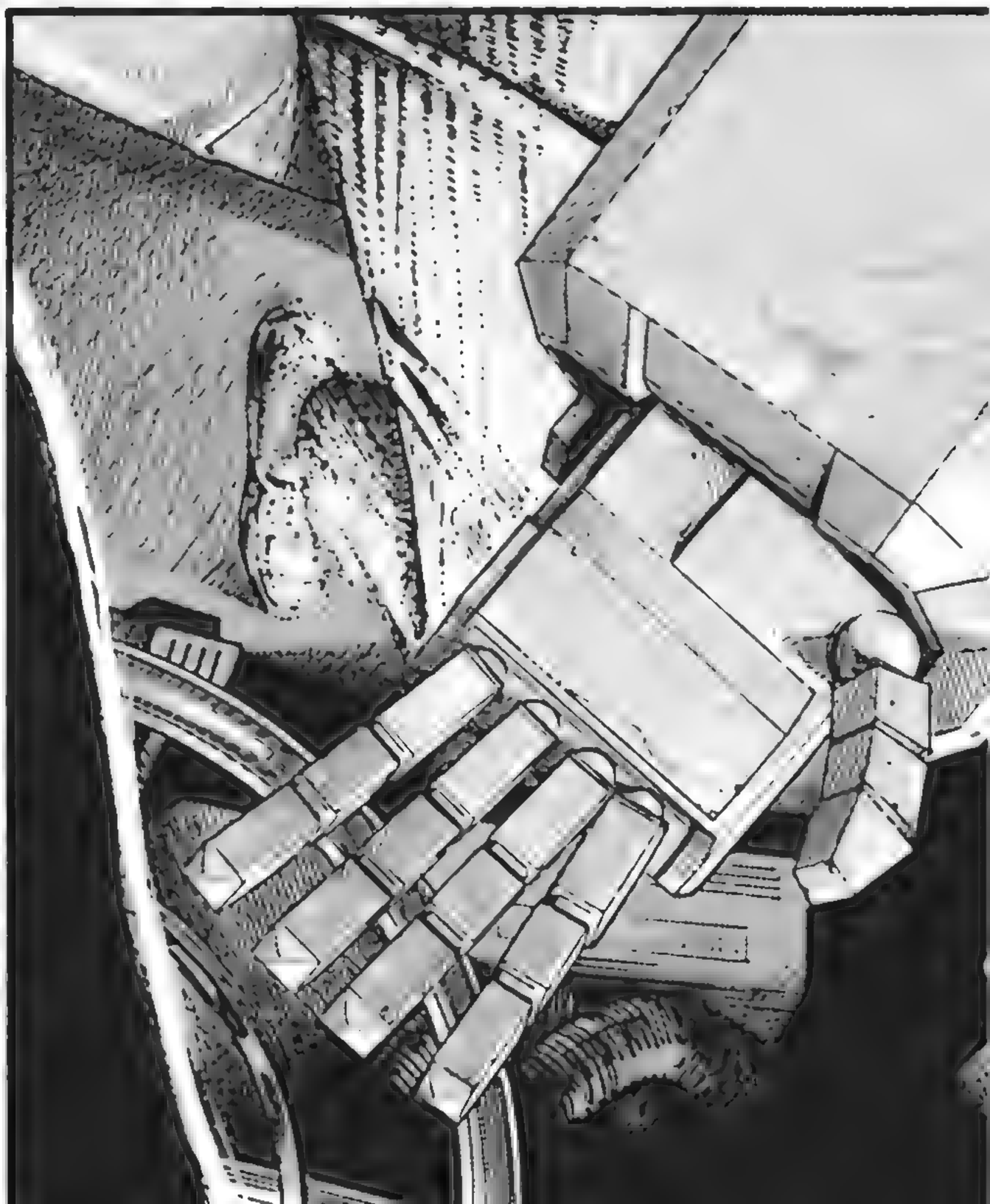
FLIP

WHP

BA-
DMP
BA-
DMP
BA-
DMP


THUMP
THUMP
THUMP

HOUND
SHE...



TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
SKRIK
SKRIK
FUU...

HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY THINK *THIS*... IS A CLOUD?

HEH ...

SMIRK

!!

.....

!

SHF

?...

RSTL

RSTL

ガ

ガ

?

FWMP

……?

ARE THESE… HAMBURG-ERS?

?!

THE HELL?

.....

.....

WHAT IS THIS, CHARITY?

FEEL FREE TO HAVE SOME IF YOU LIKE.

I BOUGHT TOO MANY BY MISTAKE.

.....

OF COURSE NOT. WHAT DOES CHARITY HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

HUH?

;

SPECIAL REPORT

TIME

.....

UNLESS YOU'RE LIVING A LIFE WHERE YOU *NEED* CHARITY OR SOMETHING.

BA DMP

WHAT?

WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE?

WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

RIGHT NOW.

WHAT IS IN FRONT OF YOU?

?

GAPE

GAPE...

?!

A HOME-LESS GUY.

.....

AM I RIGHT? ARE YOU HOMELESS?

TUG

SMILE

IS THAT SO? GOOD FOR YOU.

COURSE NOT.

I'M JUST DOING SOME SOUL-SEARCH-ING.

SO...

!

YOU'RE IN THE SUGAR GAME NOW, HUH?

.....

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

SUGAR DADDIES ...?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PLAY DUMB. I'VE SEEN YOU GOING IN AND OUT OF THAT HOTEL WITH YOUR SUGAR DADDIES.

YOU MEAN THOSE MEN?

THOSE ARE JUST CLIENTS OF MINE.

OHH.

'CAUSE IF KISSING CLIENTS IN AN ELEVATOR IS PART OF THE JOB DESCRIPTION, WELL...

HOLD UP.

CLIENTS? WHAT'S YOUR LINE OF WORK AGAIN?

KISSING ...?

ARE YOU CONFUSING ME WITH SOMEONE ELSE?

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

IT WASN'T CHASTE, EITHER. IS THAT YOUR JOB? FRENCHING?

TWITCH

TWITCH

AT LEAST PUT *SOME* EFFORT INTO SOUNDING BELIEVABLE.

UGH. COME ON.

MAYBE YOU SAW MY SISTER?

?

!!

I DO HAVE A TWIN, AFTER ALL.

STARE

Y...

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.

SQUEEZE

BLIP

BLIP

BLIP

BLIP

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

BLIP

HM?

FLASH

DIDN'T I TELL YOU ABOUT HER?

YOU'RE LYING.

THWAP

DON'T BE SILLY! OF COURSE IT'S TRUE!

FLIK

HEH HEH!

FLIK

FLIK

FLIK

FLIK

?

ENOUGH WITH THE DAMN *LIES!*

THIS "SISTER" OF YOURS...

FINE. TELL ME...

HAS *SHE* HAD PLASTIC SURGERY TOO?

PLASTIC SURGERY.

I KNOW YOU'VE HEARD OF IT.

WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN?

PLASTIC SURGERY?

!!

ARE WE TALKING ABOUT ME, OR *YOU*?

!

I'M GOING BACK TO WORK.

WELL...

HUH?

ONE LAST THING. DO YOU STILL DRAW?

.....

YOU USED TO DRAW. REMEMBER?

IN FACT... I'M REALLY QUITE GOOD AT IT.

WHY, YES, I STILL DO.

.....

OH, ALL SORTS OF THINGS. LANDSCAPES, PORTRAITURE, OIL PAINTINGS, CHARCOAL...

WHAT DO YOU DRAW?

I COULD DRAW *YOU* SOMETIME.

IF YOU'D LIKE, NAKOSHI-SAN...

HMPH.

I'LL PASS, THANKS.

ARE YOU TAKING THOSE MEDS?

HEY, NAKOSHI-SAN!

SKRT

VROOON

!

OH!

GRIN

ANYWAY! SEE YOU LATER!

TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK

.....

WHAT WAS SHE DOING HERE?

THAT'S YOUR UGLY-DUCKLING-TURNED-SWAN, RIGHT?

!

ISN'T MY EX. NOT THE ONE I WAS THINKING OF, AT LEAST.

THAT WOMAN...

...?

NANAKO NEVER SAID *ANYTHING* SHE DIDN'T TRULY BELIEVE.

NANAKO WASN'T LIKE THAT.

CHOMP

SHE BOUGHT YOU TWENTY-SEVEN...

WHICH COMES OUT TO 7,560 YEN.

THESE HAMBURGERS COST 280 YEN APIECE.

OMF

OMF

AND, THERE'S NO POSSIBLE WAY YOU COULD EAT ALL THIS BY YOURSELF!

GUESS NOT, NO.

AND?

THANKS FOR THE EXPOSITION, CAPTAIN OBVIOUS.

THEY'D ROT ON YOU.

THAT SAID, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAN SPREAD IT OUT OVER MULTIPLE DAYS WITHOUT A FRIDGE.

YOU WERE THE SAME WAY NOT TOO LONG AGO, HUH?

SO FIXATED ON SHOWY *NUMBERS* THAT SHE MISSES THE FOREST FOR THE TREES...

?

!

.....

EH, WHO KNOWS. MAYBE I'M REACHING.

CHOMP

!

AFTER ALL, THE EX WE WERE TALKING ABOUT...

OMF

OMF

.....!

BEING "BIG PICTURE" WAS HER WHOLE THING, WASN'T IT? SEEING PAST ALL THE TRIVIAL, SURFACE CRAP...

AFTER ALL, SHE COULD SEE HOMUNCULI.

.....

COULD ONLY TELL THE TRUTH.

RIGHT?

AND...

BY THE WAY...WHEN YOU SAY SHE "SAW HOMUNCULI," WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SPECIFICALLY? *HOW* DID SHE SEE THEM?

.....

WHAT SORT OF FORM DID OTHERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTORTIONS TAKE FOR HER?

TWISTED HYBRIDS OF MACHINE AND MAN, MANIFESTING AS DISFIGURED CREATURES?

DID SHE SEE WHAT YOU SEE?

SHE SAW *LIFE.*

!

NO. SHE WAS DIFFERENT. WHERE I SEE COLD MACHINERY...

WIND?

FLOWERS?

FIRE?

THINGS IN NATURE. FLOWERS, THE WIND, FIRE...

SHE'D GET THESE IMAGES OF ORGANIC THINGS.

THOSE AREN'T HOMUNCULI, THOSE ARE THE RESULTS OF AN **ONLINE PERSONALITY QUIZ!** THERE ARE A *BILLION* PEOPLE WHO EXPRESS THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERS METAPHORICALLY LIKE THAT, *ESPECIALLY* WOMEN!

SHE CAN'T HAVE BEEN THE ONLY GIRL YOU HEARD TALK LIKE THAT, RIGHT?!

.....?

THAT'S ALL I THOUGHT IT WAS TOO...AT FIRST.

……

YOUR DRAWINGS *DO* SUCK.

BUT IT WAS MORE THAN METAPHORS. SEE, UNLIKE ME...

NANAKO WAS *GOOD* AT ART. LIKE, *REALLY* GOOD.

SHE WOULD REST THE PENCIL ON ITS SIDE LIKE THIS...

AND THEN, AS SHE SKETCHED, SHE'D SHOW YOU THE **TRUE NATURE** OF WHOEVER SHE WAS SKETCHING.

HER TECHNIQUE WAS PRETTY UNUSUAL, TOO.

SHE'D TAKE A PAGE OF A WHITE SKETCHBOOK AND COVER IT IN BLACK WITH HER PENCIL.

LIKE THE WHITE LIGHT OF A HUMAN SOUL FLICKERING DIMLY WITHIN THE DARKNESS OF THE BODY.

SHE SAID DRAWING WHITE ON BLACK FELT MORE "HUMAN"...

THEN...

SHE'D DO THE ACTUAL *DRAWING* WITH AN ERASER.

I REMEMBER THIS ONE TIME...

IT WAS "A FLOWER THAT BLOOMED TOO EARLY."

BUT NOT JUST ANY FLOWER.

WE WERE SITTING ON A PARK BENCH TOGETHER, AND SHE WAS DRAWING THIS FLOWER.

NANAKO SAID *SHE* WAS THE FLOWER THAT BLOOMED TOO SOON.

AND THIS GRANDPA-AGED GUY WAS PLAYING WITH HER.

THERE WAS THIS LITTLE GIRL IN FRONT OF US. MAYBE A THIRD GRADER, EIGHT OR NINE YEARS OLD.

BUT HOW COULD SHE TELL *WHEN* SHE BLOOMED?

THE FLOWER THING WAS OBVIOUS...

HER EYES WERE FIXED ON THAT OLD MAN WITH THE LITTLE GIRL...

WHEN I ASKED HER ABOUT IT... NANAKO'S FACE WENT STRANGELY GRIM.

What ?!

He forced her to bloom...

It was him. The old man.

before she was ready.

You mean he...?

No way!

You can't be...

He's horrible.

BUT WHEN I GLANCED OVER, THE GIRL HAD STARTED CRYING.

BLOOD WAS RUNNING DOWN HER THIGH.

HER FIRST PERIOD HAD COME EARLY.

THE GIRL HAD SIMPLY STARTED HER PERIOD EARLIER THAN MOST GIRLS. THAT'S ALL IT WAS.

THAT'S WHAT THE PREMATURE FLOWER NANAKO SAW ACTUALLY SYMBOLIZED.

THE THING ABOUT THE OLD MAN ABUSING HER WAS A COMPLETE MISUNDER-STANDING.

!

HMMM...

LOOK, I'M NOT MAKING ANY CLAIMS. I'M JUST SAYING THAT IT HAPPENED.

BUT THE OTHER HALF IS LIKE... *"UH-HUH. SUUUURE."*

WELLLL... HALF OF ME IS LIKE, "OH, OKAY. SURE."

7

?

TELL ME...

SO?

THIS NANAKO GIRL. WHAT KIND OF DRAWING DID SHE MAKE OF *YOU?*

!

SHE SAID I WAS...

A... CLOUD.

SH...

.....

CLOUD ~~~?!

A...

TH...

THE FLUFFY KIND...

OR THE WHITE, FLUFFY KIND??

DO YOU MEAN LIKE...LIKE A DATABASE OR SOMETHING?

WHAT PART OF YOUR HEART DID THIS CLOUD REPRESENT?

?

TELL ME...

SO?

FINE. I THINK I CAN GUESS ANYWAY.

THIS IS *EXACTLY* WHY I DIDN'T WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT.

.....

.....

AND THAT'S NOT YOU AT *ALL*. IT WAS JUST THE PROJECTED FANTASY OF SOME LONELY UGLY CHICK TRYING TO ESCAPE REALITY.

A PRINCE CHARMING WHO'LL ENVELOP YOU IN HIS SOFTNESS AND PROTECT YOU FROM THE WORLD.

♪

SOMEONE WHO'S A CLOUD MUST HAVE A **PURE HEART.**

YEAH, I FIGURED.

I'M LIKE TWENTY PERCENT ON BOARD WITH THIS AND EIGHTY PERCENT SURE IT'S TOTAL SHIT.

FOR THE RECORD...

I WAS FORTY PERCENT AT *BEST.*

I...

I WAS EIGHTY PERCENT ON BOARD. LIKE YOU WITH ME AT FIRST.

SORT OF.

NAKOSHI-SAN...

DID YOU BELIEVE IN THESE "POWERS" OF HERS AT THE TIME?

.....

DON'T YOU SEE WHAT THAT MEANS? IT MEANS YOU, AN EQUALLY UGLY INDIVIDUAL, WERE *ALSO* TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM REALITY BY BUYING INTO HER NAIVE FANTASIES!

BESIDES, YOU SAID THIS WOMAN WAS THE ONLY PERSON TO TRULY SEE YOU! YOU SERIOUSLY BELIEVED YOU WERE A *CLOUD?*

WHO *LOOKED* AT YOU FOR THREE WHOLE MONTHS...

THIS BEAUTIFUL UGGO...

SO?

TELL ME!

!

WHY DID YOU TWO BREAK UP?

I'M NOT SAYING SHIT.

YUP. I FIGURED.

OR WERE YOU THE DUMPEE?

DID YOU DUMP HER?

I'LL FIND OUT WHATEVER I CAN FOR YOU.

?

LOOK...AT LEAST TELL ME WHAT SURFACE DETAILS YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS "NANAKO." SURNAME, AGE, BIRTHPLACE...

SHE'S NOT!

NAKOSHI-SAN... IF YOU'D JUST LET ME HELP, I COULD FIND OUT IF PLASTIC SURGERY GIRL IS YOUR EX OR NOT.

NO THANKS. THIS CONVER-SATION HASN'T EXACTLY PUT ME IN A SHARING MOOD.

THE NANAKO I KNEW NEVER LIES. *NEVER!*

I ALREADY TOLD YOU...

?!

THAT SOMETHING *HAPPENED* BETWEEN YOU AND HER.

EVEN SO, THE FACT STILL STANDS...

LET'S ASSUME MS. CREEPY-FACE *ISN'T* NANAKO, THEN.

FINE! CHILL!

AND YOU BARELY REMEMBER ANY OF YOUR TIME WITH HER. YOU CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER IF YOU SLEPT WITH HER OR NOT!

EVEN WHEN THE REST OF THE HOMUNCULI DISAPPEARED, YOU COULD STILL SEE THAT WOMAN'S, RIGHT?

.....

SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS IS TRYING TO HIDE SOMETHING FROM YOU. SOMETHING IMPORTANT!

♪

WELP. TIME TO HIT THE HAY.

KLAK

TOK TOK

TAK TAK TAK

TAK TAK TAK

……?

CRANK

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

CRANK CRANK CRANK

SHF.

FWP

SHIT

.....?

?!

MIND GIVING ME A RIDE?

TO FIND AN EMPTY TAXI ON A FRIDAY NIGHT.

IT'S REALLY HARD...

Taxi: Vacant

空車

.....

.....

IS THAT NOT ENOUGH MONEY?

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

.....!

YOU WON'T LET ME IN...

UNLESS I PAY WITH *MY BODY?*

OR PERHAPS ...

"SOMETHING **MAJOR** MUST HAVE HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU."

"DID YOU SLEEP WITH HER?"

"SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE YOU STILL SAW AS A HOMUNCULUS ..."

GET IN.

GA-KNK

GA-KNK

HIGASHI-NAKANO, PLEASE.

BA-TNK

VROOM

To be continued in *Homunculus* Volume 9.

● *Trepanation is an extremely dangerous procedure. Please do not try at home.*

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

Homunculus

Volume 7-8

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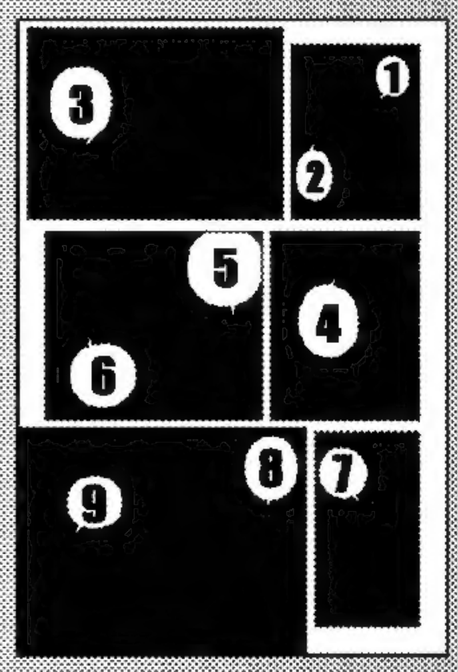
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from *right to left*, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



Face Off

Nakoshi is getting closer to the crux of who he is, and he's starting with his face—the one he *used* to have. One by one, the lies Nakoshi and Ito have told each other are coming to light. Are these the revelations Nakoshi has been seeking? Or are they waiting for him even farther down the twisted road of homunculi?

From the creator of *Ichi the Killer* and *Voyeur*, the hit supernatural horror tale that inspired a live-action film on Netflix.

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